

INDIA MARCHES PAST

CLIVE

(THIRD IMPRESSION)

BY

R. J. MINNEY

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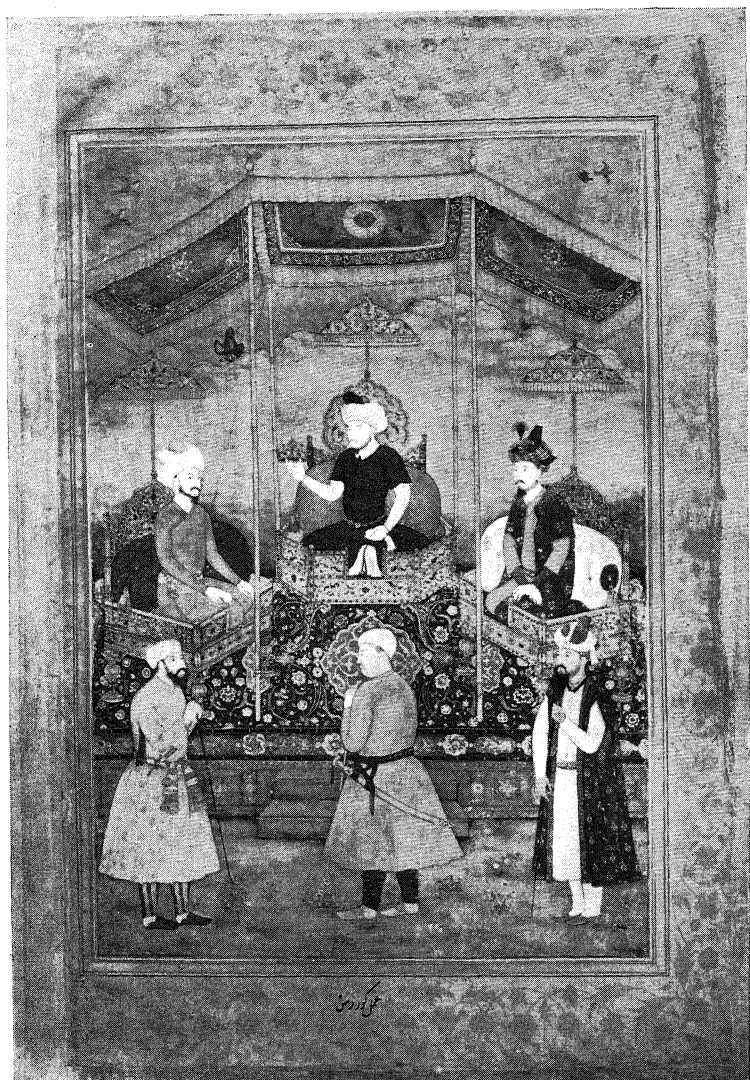
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TIMUR, BABUR AND HUMAYON
From a Mogul painting.
(Victoria and Albert Museum)

INDIA MARCHES PAST

By
R. J. MINNEY

WITH MAP AND TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

FOURTH IMPRESSION

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MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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PART ONE
KALEIDOSCOPE

CHAPTER I

THE QUEST

I

THEY had come twelve thousand miles, buffeted by roaring, lightning-lit storms, tossed from horizon to horizon by raging seas, round the Cape, up the East African coast, across the Arabian Sea, and now, with sails flapping, they rode up the broad Indian river. Twenty miles ahead lay Surat, the emporium of the East, where Arabs and Turks, Persians, Jews and Portuguese waited to load their ships with the spices and gems of Hindustan.

Captain William Hawkins, from the deck of the *Hector*, peered through the white, blistering sunshine at the flat coconut-fringed shore that curved and swayed, saw the old castle on the right, the landing *ghats* huddled at its feet, the wide green common, the lakes, the mango groves, the tumbled bazaar, with narrow, tortuous streets slinking from it like snakes. The long low houses, with balustrades about the roof for people to take the air, all bore the mark of the monsoon. They looked battered and weary; and the mud and thatch huts beyond leaned awkwardly against each other. Mosques, as if roused from slumber, stretched slim and elegant minarets against the sky. It was a gesture of pride, for this was a Moslem city, although it sat on the fringe of the Deccan, which still resisted the armed blandishments of the Mogul Emperor.

It was the 24th of August, 1608.

Hawkins was a man of middle years, with square shoulders, a wide forehead, and an air that reminded one of Drake. He was indeed nephew of the Hawkins who made such havoc of the Spanish Main with Drake; and son of another seafaring Hawkins from Plymouth, who had ships, and a family of eleven children from two wives. The younger Hawkins had already crowded much incident into his life. He had travelled in the Levant and learned Turkish; had

been in the West Indies and the Magellan Straits ; and on a previous journey in search of India, he had found himself shipwrecked off the Plate River, where he was kept for fifteen months by savages. He had a ruddy complexion, an iron constitution ; but greatest of all his gifts was his engaging affability. A most likeable man, blessed with vivacity and resource.

He had come to establish trade with India for the newly formed East India Company. So far Portugal had enjoyed a monopoly unchallenged for a hundred years. From Lisbon, Europe had bought her silks and brocades, her apes and paraqueets, and her tea, save for such merchandise as could still be squeezed through the Levant and borne thence in Italian bottoms to Venice.

Opposition from Portugal was only to be expected now. It was indeed inevitable. With tact though, and nimbleness, it seemed possible for England to step in and share in the rich trade. There was room for the two nations ; enough trade and to spare, for all Europe was hankering after these novel conceits and flavours from the Orient. A share—that was all the English could hope for ; and even that seemed difficult.

As soon as Hawkins landed, an idle, gaping crowd gathered and followed the small band of Englishmen through the streets. They had never seen such fair men, such blue eyes. It was with a mingling of revulsion and pity that the cosmopolitan throngs of Surat beheld them, for whiteness of skin had hitherto denoted but one thing in these eastern bazaars—leprosy. And yet these visitors looked hale and robust. They stood out even in that assorted medley of races ; for there were mild-eyed Parsis in long white coats and brimless high hats with a half-moon sliced off the top ; tall Sikhs from the Punjab, with fierce beards, and knives at their waists ; Jews in dressing-gown and fez ; barrel-waisted *bunnias* under red dish-cover hats ; women

with bared breasts and a dozen rings in each ear ; hook-nosed, curly-headed Armenians ; handsome, aristocratic Rajputs ; naked, ash-smeared fakirs ; squat, pock-marked men from Madras ; effeminate Bengalis : hurrying, slouching, ambling through the shadow and glare of the stalls, with their gold and silver cups, gleaming rubies and emeralds, carved boxes of sandalwood. The air was thick with flies. Cows elbowed the pedestrians from their path, extending the discourtesy even to Hindus who, in mute worship, bowed their heads low before such inconsiderate sanctity. Dogs nosed the dung. Large rats darted across the roads, and leapt over the shoulders of the cotton-spinners who sat with mouth, toes and ears harnessed to their work. In the balconies fat men took exercise by proxy, snoring ecstatically while attendants worked their muscles with knowing fingers. It was a panorama of all India, for Hawkins had heard that India was neither one country nor one people. There lay ahead a dozen religions, two hundred languages and nearly a hundred kingdoms. The Mogul was most powerful of them all, yet he ruled barely half India, and even in his domain defiant princelings constantly raised their heads, needing to be placated or subdued.

2

The English were welcomed by the merchants. A house was provided for their residence. Banquets were spread for their entertainment whenever the weather permitted, for the monsoon still raged and tore, lighting the sky with forked flashes and converting the streets into canals. The Indian attitude was warm and friendly. Here was a further outlet for trade. More buying and selling. And Hawkins' manner was so engaging. But the Portuguese were hostile from the start and strove ceaselessly to expel the intruders. No English in

India—or any other Western nation, for that matter ; for had not the East Indies been conferred upon the Portuguese by the Pope, whose supremacy these heretics had dared to question ? His Holiness's decree had been promulgated as long ago as 1494. That new mysterious world to which Columbus had opened the door had promptly been carved up by a bull between Spaniards and Portuguese, and England, not content with poaching upon their westward preserve by establishing little footholds on the American continent, had dared now to come to India. That India was not the Pope's to give did not concern the Portuguese in the slightest.

Four years after the papal decree they had come with Vasco de Gama round the Cape and established themselves here. First at Cannanore ; then at Goa, which Albuquerque attacked without provocation and seized. Here the Portuguese Eastern capital was set up. From here they darted north and south, establishing factories and forts all along the coast. In 1512 the Portuguese fleet sailed into Surat, opened fire and insisted on trading with the people. That was their way. With bluster and arrogance they had sought to oust the Arabs, whose barques bore the coveted merchandise of India to waiting Venetians in Syria. By force they had built for themselves warehouses, docks and landing-stages. And now, a hundred years later, the English had come.

The English had not thought of India until 1600. On the last day of that year Queen Elizabeth gave permission to two hundred London merchants, led by the Earl of Cumberland, to form a company for the Indian trade. Ships were instantly despatched, but Hawkins' ship was the first to reach India.

The Portuguese intended that it should also be the last. They attacked the vessel and took all on board prisoners. They then interviewed the Governor of Surat, demanding Hawkins' arrest. He referred them to the

Viceroy of the Mogul, a base rascal named Mukarrab Khan, capable of stooping to any villainy for a price. The Portuguese were ready to pay him his hire. But before he would agree to act he intended to see what pickings there might be for him in that rich store of English merchandise Hawkins had landed. The Khan sent his brother to inspect the goods. All the choicest articles were selected and taken away, for the Emperor, it was said, but none of it got further than the Viceroy's own home. When payment was mentioned, less than half the price Hawkins demanded was offered, and even this was never paid. It was always to-morrow and again to-morrow, with that subtle procrastination of which the Indian is so great a master.

The Viceroy refrained from arresting him, for it had been said that Hawkins had a letter, adorned with a large seal, from James the First to the Emperor Jehangir. It would have to be delivered in person and Mukarrab did not wish to be connected directly with its miscarrying, for he knew the wrath of the Emperor. The Portuguese, accordingly, decided to take the law into their own hands. They hired assassins to lie in wait for Hawkins and his three associates; for there was also a merchant named Finch, lying seriously ill at the time with one of those many mysterious tropical diseases that assailed visitors, and two English servants. None of them put so much as their noses out of their door without encountering one of these armed ruffians.

Some days later at a banquet Hawkins was attending, the Portuguese rushed armed men to all the exits, while three gallants swaggered in with buff coats, rapiers and pistols at their waists to demand the surrender of the Englishman. Hawkins instantly leapt from his seat, his hand upon his weapon. "Here I am," he proclaimed. His Indian hosts, however, would not suffer the outrage. Many drew their swords and rushed to his support. The

Portuguese gallants fled, their forty armed attendants outstripping them in the dash for safety.

The plot had failed. But a new one was promptly devised. This time they intended to deal with all the hated English at once. Hawkins heard a violent rapping upon his front door one evening and from the window saw thirty or forty wild-eyed men outside. With them was a Portuguese priest to give absolution for the murders they were to commit. They knocked again, more violently than before, but Hawkins refused to open the door, which fortunately was capable of withstanding the assault. So once more the four Englishmen escaped.

Portuguese assassins still lurked in the by-ways. The Englishmen lived in a state of siege until Hawkins, in despair, remembered that the Governor had been of friendly disposition. The Governor responded to his appeal. He drew the Portuguese attention to the rule against foreigners going about armed in Surat. The situation was thus made slightly more tolerable. But the odious Mukarrab Khan had still to be considered. After all, he was the Governor's superior.

Hawkins called on the Khan to solicit his aid and ventured also to remind him of the articles taken some months previously, but not yet paid for. His Excellency found the subject distinctly distasteful. He turned to a Portuguese priest, a Father Pineiro, who, encouraged by this august glance, poured forth a stream of abuse upon the English. It was more than Hawkins could stand. Disregarding the priestly robes he set upon him, and the two men, both white, both essentially of the same faith, were fighting each other with their fists until the Indian separated them.

When Hawkins left, the Jesuit, smarting under his blows, urged Mukarrab Khan to prevent the English from travelling to the Mogul capital, Agra. But the Viceroy dared not shoulder that responsibility. The

Emperor was already expecting Hawkins. What, however, he assured the priest he would do was to withhold all assistance. No escort would be provided for the journey, which, as the Jesuit knew, could not be undertaken without one.

Hawkins was informed of this ; but it did not deter him. He hired a band of mercenaries : soldiers, shot and bowmen ; and fifty Pathan horsemen. An impressive troop. They left Surat after five profitless months of waiting, Finch alone remaining to welcome the traders who had set out from England hard on Hawkins' heels.

The Portuguese, thwarted again, threw out a wide net to trip up the expedition *en route*. A messenger was rushed to a Rajah whose territory lay some miles ahead. The Portuguese begged him to waylay the Englishman. The Rajah, eager for loot, summoned his troops and waited for Hawkins. But the Englishman's escort proved too strong for the Rajah's horsemen.

Two days later still another attempt was to be made on Hawkins' life. It was discovered by the merest chance. His coachman, talking a little too freely while drunk, mentioned to all and sundry that the Portuguese had paid him liberally to poison the English captain, which he accordingly proposed to do the next morning. One of Hawkins' soldiers, overhearing this, warned his master. The coachman was arrested and sent back to Surat. The next day another attendant confessed that he too had been bribed by the Portuguese so that, should the coachman fail, the other might carry out their design. Both the Viceroy and the Jesuit were implicated in these plots.

It was not an easy journey apart from these perils. Agra lay four hundred miles inland. The narrow road, stony and dusty by turns, led across roaring rivers, over mountains, through towns, some populous, others devastated by wars ; for there were always wars in India. At present, the Moslems being supreme, most of the ruins

were of Hindu temples. The road marched past jungles, where robbers lurked and wild beasts cried terrifyingly through the night. Tombs, temples, mosques. Large lakes, shaded by trees. Past elephant farms, and fields of indigo and poppies. They journeyed by day, pitching tents for the night, under a guard. Or, if they came to *serais*, they rested there, huddled with a thousand pilgrims, each carrying his own shawl and bedding, while the mules and oxen jangled their bells in the yard all through the night.

They passed caravans of thirty and forty ox-waggons, the curtains drawn to veil the modesty of the women. Noblemen rode by on elephants with velvet and gold *howdahs*. Messengers tore past on swift camels. Gentlemen in light, two-wheeled carts. Holy men with beggar-bowls. Minstrels twanging on *sithars*. Muddy streams, dark with wild-fowl. Deer peering fascinated from the wayside. Day after day through the blazing dust for two and a half months. Then Agra, with its cool white palaces in a half-moon along the river front, its red fort, its gilded minarets, the muezzin calling, the pageantry of the Court, the pale Kashmiri *nautch* girls peering through lattices in the bazaar.

3

It was Hawkins' intention upon arriving in Agra to rent a house, unpack his baggage, wash, dress himself in his best apparel and then crave an audience of the Emperor. But he was allowed to do none of these things. The Emperor, hearing of his arrival, instantly despatched the Knight Marshal with a lordly escort ; and, giving Hawkins no time for anything, they bore him off in state through the streets to the palace.

The Mogul, a short, plump man, with a straggly beard, was seated on his lofty throne, rich carpets underfoot, a

gaudy canopy overhead. Around were nobles ablaze with jewels and sprinkled with a thousand perfumes. From His Majesty's turban large diamonds flashed a beam of light, now here, now there, like searchlights on dark waters. From his throat hung row upon row of pearls, the size of eggs. Two stalwart Indians stood behind His Majesty with fans; a third flicked flies off the imperial person with a switch. Hawkins made his obeisance; then approached with the letter from James the First.

The Mogul seized it, turned it over many times, examined the royal seal and tested it with his fingers. He then looked round the Court and beckoned to a Portuguese priest to come up and read it.

The Jesuit, with a half-laugh, dismissed the letter as worthless and insulting. But Hawkins, with commendable resource, said: "Your Majesty, how can this letter be ill-written, when my King demandeth favour of Your Majesty?"

"That is true," agreed the Emperor.

His Majesty was agreeably surprised to find that Hawkins could speak Turkish. They talked to each other for some moments and then the Mogul took Hawkins into an inner room where the Englishman was told to wait, while the Emperor visited his women. Hawkins waited two hours.

They conversed again on his return, and again the next day, for the Emperor had taken a fancy to this good-humoured English captain, who had travelled so far, westward and east, and was able to tell so many amusing tales of his adventures. Sometimes they met twice a day, Hawkins sitting up to drink with His Majesty in the evening. The name of Hawkins, however, was unfortunate, His Majesty thought. It did not come easily to the Indian tongue; so he graciously rechristened his friend "English Khan." How very different this fellow

was (he reflected) from that dull dog, John Mildenhall, who had come as a sort of unofficial ambassador to his father Akbar's Court, to prepare the way. He had brought no letter, no credentials; but kept talking fulsomely of his wonderful Queen Elizabeth. But Hawkins—! The Emperor found him a place in Court, conferred a knighthood on him and promised to raise him to the peerage. He also ordered an allowance of £3200 a year to be paid to Hawkins from the Privy Purse.

It was not easy in such an atmosphere for the Portuguese to achieve much; yet they continued their intrigues. They even neglected their masses and their church¹ while they worked with redoubled zeal for Hawkins' undoing. Again assassins were employed. Poison was introduced into the Englishmen's food. All three fell seriously ill. The boy, Stephen Gravenor, died.

At the first favourable moment Hawkins dropped a hint of this to the Emperor. He also told him of all that had previously been attempted. The Mogul was shocked. He sent for the Jesuits and warned them that if Hawkins "died of any extraordinary casualty they should all rue for it." As a further safeguard, His Majesty advised Hawkins to marry, so that his wife might protect his food from the poisoners. The Emperor himself sought a wife for his guest. Did he want a white woman, and a Christian? Even such would be found. Was there not the daughter of Mubarak Shah, the Armenian, who had a place at Akbar's Court? A nice girl, who had been robbed of her inheritance by her uncles. The Emperor offered with her as dowry a drove of slaves. Hawkins fell in with this proposal. But no Jesuit, he swore, should marry them. He would sooner his cook performed the ceremony, which his cook Nicholas Ufflet accordingly did, reading the service slowly from the unfamiliar prayer book.

¹ Hawkins' own narrative in *Purchass his Pilgrims*.

Hawkins had heard the Mogul talked of in Europe as the richest King in the world, but his wildest fancies had not conceived such ostentation and splendour as he found at Court. In the royal stables he saw 12,000 elephants, 12,000 horses and 2000 camels. A hundred tame lions romped about the palace grounds. Elegant peacocks peered in a lordly way into the verandahs. Apes leapt from tree to tree. In lobby and foyer song birds twittered—4000 of them. There were a hundred chairs made of solid gold or silver. The drinking cups were of one piece, emerald or ruby. Even the saddles and swords were set with precious stones.

His Majesty had three hundred wives, with tall muscular eunuchs to guard the approaches of the harem—young men with smooth faces and high voices, trained from childhood for this quaint vocation, in which they must exercise their strength but restrain their passion, for the women were for the use of the master, if and when required, and not for the diversion of the attendants.

It was the Emperor's custom every evening after prayers to retire to a private room and get nobly drunk. With him went a few privileged friends, Hawkins among them. To assist the wine His Majesty took opium until he passed from incoherence to speechlessness. "And being in the height of his drinke," Hawkins has recorded, "he layeth him downe to sleepe, every man departing to his owne home. And after he hath slept two houres, they wake him, and bring his supper to him, at which time he is not able to feed himselfe ; but it is thrust into his mouth by others, and this is about one of the clocke : and then he sleepeth the rest of the night. Now in the space of these sixe cups, he doth many idle things ; and whatsoever he doth, either without or within, drunken or sober, he hath writers, who by turnes set downe everything in writing which he doth : so that there is nothing passeth in his lifetime, which is not noted : no, not so much as

his going to the necessary ; and how often he lieth with his women, and with whom."

The friendship of His Majesty for Hawkins made it easy for the English to obtain all the trading facilities they required. A *firman* was issued under the imperial seal, granting them permission to build and equip a factory at Surat, to trade where and when they pleased, and to go and come as they chose.

Hearing that another English ship had arrived in Surat, Hawkins rushed the permits down to Finch. Some of the newcomers drifted towards the capital, where their behaviour was anything but exemplary. Hawkins was embarrassed, for the ever-present danger on such occasions was that men while in drink might fall to quarrelling in the bazaars and offend against the religious susceptibilities of the people. Once a sailor ran all the way home with an angry crowd of natives in pursuit. On another occasion the younger son of a lord, sent away from England in the hope that the perilous voyage would make short work of him, contrived, while hundreds died of the scurvy, to survive and cause considerable annoyance to his fellows in India. He too got drunk and uproarious, shooting off a gun and wounding an Indian.

The Portuguese, meanwhile, had been engaged for months in plying all the influential men at Court with bribes. The Mogul lived in a corrupt atmosphere. The men around him could be bought. His Majesty himself had to be approached with gifts. If the offering proved to his taste he granted all demands, only to retract everything a day or two later, when somebody else approached with a lordlier offering. The Portuguese succeeded in getting the Vizier into their pay. Hawkins, unaware of all this, had been busy trying to settle his score with that old enemy Mukarrab Khan, who had not yet paid a penny for the goods, among which were some costly offerings brought out especially for the Emperor.

Hawkins mentioned it to the Mogul. His Majesty said he had been receiving a great many complaints against Mukarrab Khan from all quarters. He would look into the matter personally. He despatched a guard to the coast to bring the cunning Viceroy before him. But Mukarrab proved equal to the emergency. He hurriedly distributed lavish bribes all round the Court. Even the King's sons were paid to plead for him. Then, bowing profoundly before His Majesty, he poured forth such a torrent of promises that the Emperor seemed disposed to give him another chance. But just then a pathetic little moneylender, tears streaming from his eyes, came and laid his head upon the imperial carpet. He had still another complaint against Mukarrab Khan. The Viceroy, having caught a glimpse of the moneylender's daughter—a lovely girl, as all who had seen her agreed, a girl indeed not yet of mature years—had desired her and seized her, declaring that she was for the Emperor. But the dog had kept her for himself, and after deflowering her, had passed her on to a Hindu priest, who would not let her go even now.

The Mogul was very angry at this. He had Mukarrab seized and dragged off to prison. As for the Hindu priest, nothing would satisfy His Majesty but the immediate severance of the unfortunate man's "privy members." It was done. But influence at Court interceded on Mukarrab's behalf and a few days later he emerged smiling from prison and was restored to all his former glory as Viceroy of Surat and Cambay.

That was the hour of Mukarrab Khan's revenge. Supported by the Vizier, the most powerful of all about the Emperor, Mukarrab Khan launched a campaign for the expulsion of Hawkins. He summoned merchants from Surat to denounce the English. They concocted a piteous tale of wrongs inflicted, losses endured; for the Portuguese, they declared, had imposed a blockade which

would endure so long as the English enjoyed any favours from the Emperor. The Vizier swelled the chorus by announcing that the imperial exchequer had lost no less than 100,000 mamadies since Hawkins' coming, through the almost complete stoppage of all maritime trade. It was absurdly untrue, though the loss in customs duties was indeed apparent, for the Vizier and Mukarrab Khan had taken the precaution of abstracting that sum and dividing it between them.

His Majesty could not, of course, permit so heavy a fall in revenues to continue. So, without further ado, he proclaimed: "Let the English come no more." A message was sent through Mukarrab Khan to comfort the Portuguese. They were assured that the English would never again be suffered to enter by any of the imperial ports.

Thus all that Hawkins had so long striven for was suddenly undone. He had been nearly two years at Court, working for this one end. The imperial permission had been obtained and then snatched from his fingers. Almost all his goods had gone too, not even paid for. The allowance the Emperor had promised had not been received. The Vizier had withheld it. When Hawkins, in despair, chanced to mention this, he succeeded only in sealing his own doom. Henceforth the Vizier was the bitterest of his enemies. He contrived to get Hawkins dismissed from the inner circle of courtiers. The Englishman was not permitted in future to come within the limits of the red rails.

4

It was difficult in so corrupt a Court to achieve anything. The monarch himself was a creature of whims—unstable, lascivious, inconceivably cruel. It was his custom to arise at daybreak, say his prayers and then show himself on the balcony to the thousands who had assembled outside just for this jostled, uncomfortable glimpse. Then

he went back again to bed. After a further spell of sleep, he breakfasted and toyed away the rest of the morning with his women. For three hours every afternoon he watched spectacular exhibitions on the *maidan* outside the palace. There were elephant fights, in which many spectators and attendants were killed every day, and many more injured. None of those injured seriously was allowed to live ; for the Emperor was superstitious. He did not want the crippled and sightless to reproach and curse him for the rest of their days. So they were handed over to the imperial executioners.

After this barbaric diversion, His Majesty went indoors again to his women. An hour or so later he would emerge solaced and sit in Durbar to dispense justice to all comers, no matter how humble. Some had travelled many hundreds of miles with their families for a royal disentangling of their perplexities. They told him of debts of a few shillings that had been long overdue and of wives enticed away by younger men. Woe betide them if His Majesty regarded their complaints as unworthy of his personal notice. He never neglected to punish such presumption. Judgment was delivered by His Majesty, as the whim prompted. Always in attendance were forty executioners under the eye of a villainous chief. They stood in two grim rows, wearing quilted caps, with hatchets poised on their shoulders. Beside them was a platoon of men with stout whips, ready for action.

Eight officers who had fled from Patna when that city was captured by outlaws were ordered to be shaved, both head and beard, dressed in women's apparel and led through the streets on asses, face backwards. After the tour they were brought again before the Emperor, whipped and sent to prison for the rest of their lives. Another punishment Hawkins witnessed was administered upon the Comptroller of the Royal Household, one of the few friends he still had at Court. It was the Emperor's

custom to do things on an impulse. Suddenly the Court would be informed that His Majesty was setting out on a long journey. If when he emerged from the palace he mounted a horse, they knew that he was going to war, for there was always a war in progress somewhere in his dominions. But if he called for an elephant, it meant that His Majesty was going hunting. In either case, with tents, camp-followers, attendants and nobles, the cortege formed a perambulating canvas town of as many as 200,000 people. On one of these jaunts a case of crockery strapped to the back of a camel fell off. Amid the wreckage the Comptroller saw with horror a dainty china dish, which the Emperor had admired. In dismay, for nobody knew how the Emperor would receive the news, he despatched a messenger all the way to China, hoping to replace the dish before His Majesty missed it. For two years the Emperor said nothing, then suddenly he asked for it. Travelling facilities being slow, the messenger had unfortunately not yet returned. The Emperor called again. The news had to be broken gently to him. His Majesty was so angry that he swept aside all explanations. He had the Comptroller whipped before the entire Court by two men with whips made of stout cords. After a hundred and twenty lashes had been delivered, the cowering man, his back a mass of gaping wounds, was passed on to twenty attendants who were instructed to set upon the poor devil with cudgels. Many cudgels were broken upon him. The bruised, battered, blood-drenched relic of humanity lay lifelessly before His Majesty. But it was found that he was not yet dead, so he was carried off to prison, and His Majesty passed a life sentence upon him. But some months later in an impulse of generosity the Emperor released him on condition he set out instantly in quest of a like dish himself.

Then one evening a Pathan who had demanded a salary that appeared to the Emperor to be exorbitant,

was ordered to fight a wild lion with his bare hands. In a few minutes the animal made mincemeat of the man. The sport proved pleasing to His Majesty, but all too brief. So ten men of the guard were summoned to battle with the lion in turn. Three of them were killed outright. All the others were grievously injured.

It was difficult to plead with such a monarch. But Hawkins, having come so far and waited so long, was not disposed to give way to despair. He resolved to approach His Majesty once more—with a more attractive offering than ever this time ; for His Majesty listened best when gifts spoke. Hawkins decided to spend almost all the money he possessed. He too could play the game of the Portuguese. All the influential men about the monarch were supplied with presents. For the Mogul himself Hawkins secured a most precious ruby ring, at the sight of which even the Vizier, hostile though his bearing towards the English, declared that the King may be considered as already won. So once more Hawkins approached His Majesty. Once more his petition was read, and the Emperor, beaming over the gift that glittered on his finger, granted all that Hawkins asked. Orders were instantly issued for an English factory to be established in Surat. Permission to trade freely was again granted. Hawkins made his obeisance in gratitude and was just leaving when one of the noblemen, a friend both of Mukarrab Khan and the scoundrelly Vizier, approached the Emperor to remind him of something he had overlooked : the grave danger that lay behind these English concessions. The Portuguese would unquestionably be offended—and were they not all-powerful at sea ? Trade would once again be brought to a standstill. All the merchants along the coast would be ruined. The imperial customs would also suffer.

“ It must not be,” said His Majesty.

And so, in a moment, all was again undone. The

money Hawkins had spent in bribes and on presents was lost ; so too were the two long years he had spent in waiting and pleading at Court.

Nothing could now avail. The influence against him was too powerful. There remained but for him to ask for leave to depart. His Majesty granted it. He refused, however, to give a letter for the English King. No, Hawkins was informed, it was not the custom of so great a monarch to write to a petty princeling.

5

The last thing the Mogul desired was to offend the Portuguese ; for it was obvious that he found them very useful. There was a vast coast-line—two sides of a triangle—an appreciable part of which belonged to the Emperor. Yet he possessed no navy. He had a few ships here and there, but they were unequal even to the onslaught of pirates, who preyed on all shipping and attacked the pilgrims bound for the holy city of Mecca. The Portuguese with their frigates and galleons kept the sea roads clear. It was a self-appointed task, but it was none the less a service ; and His Majesty recognised that some slight favour was due to them in return. Indeed he granted them many favours. He allowed them to build a church in the imperial capital and another at Lahore. Their religious processions were permitted to use the streets. Leave was even given them to make converts—if they could.

Yet there was much about the Portuguese that was distasteful to the Mogul. Their attitude towards Moslems, for instance, whom they insisted on calling Moors, a term behind which lurked a burning desire for revenge for all the havoc the Moors had wrought in Western Europe. His Majesty had news brought him almost daily of the contemptible Portuguese practices. At their

settlements Indians, and especially Moslems, were being dragged to the font and baptised forcibly. They had been known to stuff a Moslem's mouth with dirt and fasten it up with a slice of pork. Once the ears of a Brahmin were cut off and dog's ears sewn on in their place. Temples had been plundered. The sacred Tooth of Buddha, revered by millions, had been reduced to powder and flung into the sea. Then an Inquisition had been set up, with the torture-rack and the stake. The Portuguese had come to conquer and convert. All along the coast in their fortified settlements, haughty hidalgos were engaged in breeding half-castes, buying and selling justice, indulging in indolence and sloth. Yet they policed the seas for the Mogul and made it possible for the shipping of his merchants to go to and fro ; so he was content to shut his eyes to these excesses.

The English did not abate their efforts for concessions after Hawkins had set out with his Eastern wife on the journey home, which fate did not permit him to complete. He died within sight of England. His successors in Surat knew that the trade was there—that the Portuguese had no right whatever to a monopoly. Fresh emissaries were despatched to the imperial Court. All were intercepted. Most of them were killed *en route*. Nothing, it was realised at last, could possibly be achieved until Portugal had been disposed of.

So in September 1612, less than a year after Hawkins' departure, Captain Thomas Best sailed with two ships up the river to Surat. He showed the Governor the impressive gift he had brought for the Emperor and then put it safely away, saying : " Concessions first, otherwise no present." But before the Mogul could send an answer from Agra, four Portuguese war-ships swaggered towards them. Best opened fire instantly and inflicted so crushing a defeat that all India was aghast. The illusion of Portuguese invincibility had at last been shattered.

The Emperor was among the first to send Best his congratulations. His Majesty was a little relieved that he should no longer have to rely so much on the Portuguese. He intended in future to play these two strange white nations off against each other, and so enjoy a measure of security—and peace. All the concessions the English wanted were immediately granted.

Foolishly, the Portuguese vented their resentment on the Emperor. Familiar with his lack of resolution, they strove to force the issue by a display of strength. But it was miscalculated. Four of the imperial ships were pounced upon. All their merchandise was confiscated. The Moslems were carried off as prisoners. It was unfortunate for the Portuguese that the Queen Mother had a personal interest in one of these ships. There was treasure aboard estimated at £100,000 sterling. Another ship carried two lovely girls who had been especially acquired for the Emperor.

His Majesty was furious. A *firman* was at once issued ordering the arrest of every Portuguese in the Mogul's dominions. All the churches were closed. All Christian processions were forbidden. Most galling of all perhaps, Mukarrab Khan was instructed to start a war on the Portuguese.

While these conditions prevailed Captain Downton sailed into Surat with four ships and an assortment of odd novelties with which to delight the barbarous heart of Mukarrab. There were cases of knives and combs, pictures of Moses and the Judgment of Paris, and some bottles of "rich and strong waters." For the Emperor, Downton had brought pictures of the English Royal Family and a large mastiff.

The Portuguese, eager to repair the damage to their prestige, paraded their entire armada against the English. There were six great galleons, three other ships, sixty frigates and two galleys. In all the Portuguese had

234 guns and 9000 men. Downton in his four ships had no more than 800 men, many of them sick and dying. The natives were so overawed by this display that Mukarrab Khan opened negotiations with the likely victors. The English began by setting fire to three of the frigates. They followed this up by firing a salvo into the enemy every morning and evening to provoke an attack. But nothing happened. The natives, observing that in all their strength the Portuguese were afraid of a small defiant band, brought offerings of fruit and stores to the English. A few days later the Portuguese sailed away, for they had run out of food and water.

There was great rejoicing ashore by the Indians. Portuguese prestige was completely destroyed now. Their power in the East soon set into a rapid decline. Goa, their Indian capital, regarded as one of the wealthiest cities in the country, dwindled in wealth and population. The jungle crawled stealthily towards it, pounced and claimed it for its own. Trees forced their way through the proud houses. Shrubs seized and twisted the walls of the churches. A new town has since been built, but the Goa of Albuquerque is but a tomb of a departed glory.

The English, however, were not left in undisputed sway. True, they spread east and west and up the rivers of Bengal. But the Dutch, already established further afield in Java and the Moluccas, claimed a share now in the Indian trade. A little later the French came too, seeking not a share but a monopoly.

For reasons quite unconnected with these fresh rivalries, the English were repeatedly driven to the verge of abandoning the Indian trade completely. The East India Company, great though its wealth and large though its profits despite the frequent loss of ships and treasure, was so buffeted and torn by the whims of avaricious English rulers, that their position became increasingly intolerable. The original Charter, granted by Queen Elizabeth for a term

of fifteen years, had been renewed in perpetuity by her successor. But Charles the First, chronically in need of money, broke all the earlier pledges. He granted charters to rival companies, whose men stalked through the bazaars of India, challenging the rights of the Company's merchants, while they enjoyed the advantages and the security that had been won by the older concern. Trade was hampered. The Company suffered serious financial losses. Immediately after this came the Civil War and the levy by the Roundheads of a forced loan of £5000 from the Company. Cromwell happily readjusted the balance. He amalgamated the rival concerns and exacted compensation from the Dutch for their raids on the East India ships.

But a new complication soon arose. England was swept by a wave of hostility against the East India Company. People complained that the imported calicoes, shawls and muslins were crippling home industries. They attacked the Company's right to a monopoly and destroyed it by launching a new corporation. This caused fresh difficulties in the East, and the position at home, far from being eased, became worse, for the volume of imports was now doubled.

Early in the eighteenth century the two companies were again merged ; which was as well, for the French were about to drive the English completely from the Indian market. The duel with France lasted nearly a century. Britain emerged victorious.

In this, as throughout India's history, the issue was merely : which master ?—for trade led in an odd way to the tilting of the august Mogul off his exalted throne.

Thus was Britain added to that long line of conquerors who have through the ages made India their arena.

CHAPTER II

CONQUERORS ON PARADE

I

HISTORY'S beginnings are always vague. There is a twilight prelude, strewn with archæological fragments and philological roots. After a Herculean struggle certain facts emerge : cold, isolated, incomplete ; and to these we try to hitch the traditional songs or sagas, which were composed, elaborated and adapted hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years later.

So there can be no certainty about India's dawn. All we know is that wave upon wave of conquest burst through the mountain passes of the north-west, bringing fierce men from the deserts and highlands of Central Asia to the smiling, golden plains below. Two thousand years of such invasion and colonisation are known to us as the Aryan wave. It was really a succession of Aryan waves. Of the same stock, the invaders differed from each other, just as the white European traders of later years differed, English from Portuguese, Dutch from French. They were also mutually antagonistic. Some seized the spoils of victory and departed ; others brought their wives and families and built mud and thatch homes, driving the dark, squat aborigine southward or into the jungles that still covered vast tracts of India. From the Burmese uplands to the east and the Himalayan slopes to the north the high cheek-boned, polyandrous Mongols swept down periodically, conquering and colonising. Such was the patchwork of races strewn across the fertile breast of Hindustan from the Chinese frontier to Afghanistan. Southward, beyond the mountains of the Deccan, the mists of uncertainty still lingered, concealing doubtless as variegated a human assortment of Dravidians, and, along the coast, Arabs and Malaysans. India is, to this day, an ethnological museum, a jig-saw of racial remnants.

By the sixth century B.C. conquest and fusion had made

a pattern of sixteen States along the northern belt ; there were unnumbered others over the rest of the country. Civilisation had begun to blossom. There were towns and villages. Hinduism had been evolved and the Brahmins were already engaged in appropriating all the privileges of priestly power. Though the States were at constant war with each other, the virility had been drained out of the men by the debilitating climate. They coveted luxuries. They longed to loll in cool places. They fought only when their homes were endangered or when driven by an ambitious Rajah, covetous of the glory of his neighbour. But they were unequal in strength to the untamed hordes that still poured in from east and north and especially through the passes of the north-west. Mere handfuls were able to overthrow vast armies. So it has always been in India.

About this time the first recorded invasion of India occurred. It was made by the Persians, who had but lately established the greatest empire the world had yet seen : comprising most of Greece, all Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, stretching northward to the Caucasus, embracing Armenia, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and almost all Central Asia. An astonishingly large empire. To this Darius added a north-western slice of India. He descended on the Indus valley and reached southward to establish a naval base on the Indian Ocean. The conquered country was converted into a Persian satrapy, the richest and most populous, we are told, in the entire Persian empire, to whose glory Indian archers added—a picturesque corps in cotton uniforms, with smart cane bows and iron-tipped arrows¹—by fighting with the imperial army in Europe.

This Persian occupation of India endured for two hundred years. Then came Alexander the Great.

¹ Herodotus, VII, 65.

2

Alexander was only twenty-six years old when he invaded India. Smooth-faced, long-haired, pink-cheeked, he clung vainly to his boyish appearance. But in strategy and war he was already old. He had been trained with care by a devoted father, to whom he showed no gratitude ; had Aristotle for his private tutor ; and took command of an army when barely sixteen. He grew up arrogant, impulsive, cruel and designing. He schemed for power. Spurred on by his witch of a mother, he quarrelled with his father, who was murdered soon afterwards. Thus Alexander inherited the invincible phalanx that Philip of Macedon had drilled and disciplined, the dashing squadrons of mounted bowmen and the tried generals. Without courage and imagination he would, of course, have achieved nothing. He had both. His daring was indeed extraordinary. With recklessness he exposed himself again and again to danger, inspiring his men to astonishing fortitude and valour.

He began his reign with an audacious assault upon the far-flung empire of the Persians. He felt confident he could snatch it from the limp grasp of the successors of Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes. Town after town fell before his advancing armies. Those who dared to resist were punished with savage cruelty. Their towns were burnt. Every man, woman and child was butchered. Thus did he warn the provinces that lay ahead of the terrible vengeance awaiting all who behaved likewise. So wherever he went, terrified princes waited on their knees to offer him their crowns. The cowed populace gazed at him in mute awe. The latest Darius, pitiful heir of a great name, fled in such haste that his entire harem was abandoned to the mercy of Alexander.

The lengthening line of communication stretched on . . . from Macedonia to India, over 3000 miles. In

the countries it traversed, Alexander set up hireling rulers to preserve order. Yet that line could have been snapped at a dozen points had anyone dared assault it. Arrived on the Indian frontier, Alexander found the Hindu States too busy quarrelling among themselves to unite against him. Some submitted readily. They sent him vast tributes of oxen and sheep. Taxila, that proud seat of learning, with its famous medical school and its arts and science faculties, opened its doors to Alexander's dusty army. Others battled valiantly, but in vain. Once Alexander was wounded in the shoulder by a dart. His troops were so enraged at this that they avenged it with a general massacre, devastating the countryside for miles. Alexander augmented his forces as he advanced. Those who refused to serve were ruthlessly dealt with. The others had the privilege of killing their own countrymen, whom they would, of course, have killed in any event, since they were already engaged in mutual extermination when he arrived. From time to time Alexander released his troops for Bacchanalian revelry. They retired into the jungles, swept every decency by the board, drank and made merry for weeks. Then at the call to arms the men fell in refreshed for the march onward.

India was not destined to fall easily into his grasp. Leaving Taxila, Alexander found a formidable army across his path. It had been recruited from a number of States, banded now under the leadership of King Porus. There were 30,000 foot-soldiers, 4000 horsemen, 500 war-chariots and untold elephants. Alexander had only 17,000 men, some of whom were themselves Indians. But, as was to be demonstrated again and again in the chequered years ahead, a mere handful of disciplined invaders was able to overthrow the unwieldy, ill-equipped hordes of India. The army of Porus, it is recorded, presented "very much the appearance of a city—the elephants as they stood resembling its towers,

and the men-at-arms placed between them resembling the lines of wall intervening between tower and tower."¹ None the less in that unequal conflict with Alexander it was practically annihilated. Porus himself, a giant of a man, fought valiantly until, faint with nine wounds, he was borne away a prisoner. A further vast slice of India was thus added to the Macedonian Empire. Alexander chose Porus as his Viceroy, giving that brave though vanquished king a region far larger than he originally ruled. On that memorable battlefield Alexander also set up a town to the glory of his fallen charger, which had brought him so far through many perils.

All Northern India now lay at Alexander's feet. He marched onward to Bengal, but his soldiers, who had tramped across mountains and valleys for years, marching ever further from their homes, refused to go on. An easy victory was snatched from Alexander by this mutiny; for the adjacent kingdom of Magadha was ripe for plucking. On the throne sat the son of a crafty barber, who by whispering love in the delicate ear of the queen, had succeeded in seducing her, in murdering the king, and founding a new dynasty of his own. The people were now up in arms against this base paramour. A relative of the royal house fell upon his knees before Alexander, begging him to turn out the sorry wretch. But Alexander, answering the homesickness of his men, set his feet homeward, only to be met a few days later by reinforcements from Greece, 12,000 men eager to share in the glories of new conquests. Alexander hesitated for a moment, then struck southward towards the Indian Ocean. Large forests were hacked down to build 2000 ships for his men to sail in down the Indus. It proved an eventful journey. The happy chanting of the fair oarsmen was listened to with awe by gaping, startled throngs along the banks, until some half-savage jungle tribes, clad in rude skins, were imprudent

¹ Diodorus, XVII, 87.

enough to oppose Alexander's progress. Then the most hideous massacres followed. Twice Alexander was very near losing his life. And in each instance his vengeance was more terrible than the gods'. Thousands of Indians were slaughtered and thousands more sold into slavery. At one settlement, hearing of his approach, the terrified people—20,000 of them—set fire to their huts and flung their wives, children and themselves into the flames to escape punishment at his hands.

Alexander passed on triumphant ; but before he could return to Macedonia he died of a fever following a wild bout of drunkenness. A few months later everything he had won in India was lost. It was as if he had not been, save for the smouldering villages, the blood-stained fields, the sad-eyed women, the vanished families and the towns he had strewn vaingloriously along his unhallowed track, each with the name of Alexandria. In India two survive to this day, modified by a forgiving posterity to Secunderabad and Kandahar. He left too a scattered brood of mottled half-breeds, for he had hoped to unify his assorted empire by intermarriage. Ninety of his generals were forced to marry Eastern brides in mass formation at a lively marriage feast. Thousands of his Macedonian soldiers mated at his orders with coloured women. Alexander himself took many Asiatic wives. Eight families of chieftains on the Indian frontier to this day claim descent from this boyish conqueror.

3

As soon as news of Alexander's death reached India the Hindu adventurer who had urged him onward to Magadha, seized the opportunity to carve out an empire for himself. He had observed the methods of the invader and now applied them. Chandragupta was himself only twenty-five at the time. He roused the clans of the frontier. They rose

against the Greek garrisons, paid off the old score by a massacre and became free of the foreign yoke. Consolidating his position here as their leader, Chandragupta turned next to Magadha, where the profligacy and avarice of the barber's heir made the populace welcome their deliverer.

Alexander's lesson had been well learnt. The young Indian fell about him to right and left, swallowing a State at every gulp, until the hundred or more kingdoms that had warred with each other were welded together under his suzerainty. He became thus the first Emperor of India, ruling, it is true, not the entire country, but more of it than had ever before been brought under one sceptre.

With the peace and security provided by his ægis, India was able to fashion a civilisation that soon became the envy and example of the world. We have ample evidence of this, for there were now at the Indian Court Greek ambassadors whose records have been preserved for us. Chandragupta surrounded himself with the magnificence that has become associated since with all Indian monarchs. He had a sumptuous palace, more lordly than the palaces of Susa and Ekbatana, parks laid out with fountains and fish-ponds, a personal bodyguard of female archers to guard his bed: for he was stalked by assassins and had to sleep in a different room each night.

His Majesty was a great economist of time. It did not seem to him incongruous that as he lay in durbar four attendants with ebony rollers should massage his almost naked body while the petitioners bowed, salaamed and passed on. Indeed His Majesty's most intimate acts were a matter of national concern. Once a year, when he washed his hair, a festival was held, so that the entire country might rejoice.

He was an absolute monarch, autocratic, untrammelled by any constitutional traditions or councils; a cruel and severe king with slight regard for human life; but the

roads he built, of which the Grand Trunk Road has survived for more than two thousand years, the hospitals he established, the wells he dug, the hostels he set up for travellers, his postal and police systems, his development of sanitation and extensive irrigation by canals, are evidence of the great benefits he conferred. In the taverns he insisted that there should be perfumes, flowers, water and "other comfortable things" according to the season, so that drink should not be the only attraction. He established licensed gambling saloons, where 5 per cent of the winnings were appropriated by the State and untold revenue was derived from licences, fees for the hire of dice, and rent of the gambling halls. There were gladiatorial combats between men. But the great popular diversion was ox-racing, which was attended always by keen betting. The oxen raced round a course of 6000 yards, hitched on to cars, two oxen and a horse to each team. The cities of India were thronged with foreigners, for whose welcome and comfort Chandragupta was always solicitous. They were provided with lodgings, an escort for their safety, and medical attendance.

Such magnificence and liberality cost a great deal to maintain, and every means was adopted for extorting money from the populace. The taxation was excessive. In addition the people were called upon to pay "benevolences" on special occasions, according to the King's discretion. Honours were sold. The Prime Minister talked shamelessly of the imperial policy "of thinning the rich by exacting excessive revenue and causing them to vomit their accumulated wealth." What each man was worth was easy to ascertain; for censuses were taken, statistics were carefully compiled, and spies were released in battalions to listen to every whisper and report it to the Crown. They pried on officials. They listened in the streets for every stray breath of sedition. Nor did they hesitate to make use of courtesans for their

purpose. But with age piety, which in that languorous climate was creeping gradually over the entire nation, possessed the Emperor. He retired, it is said, to live as an ascetic, renouncing all the material glories for which he had battled and oppressed his subjects.

Both his son and his grandson, the famous King Asoka, added greatly to his empire until all India, save four small States in the extreme south, came under one rule. But Asoka, though his name has become illustrious, was chiefly responsible for the decline of India's martial ardour. Himself a valiant fighter in his earlier years, his conquest of Kalinga (now Orissa) marked the turning point in his life and in the history of India. That victory was purchased with the lives of 100,000 slain in battle, the liberty of 150,000 who had been sold into slavery, and the anguish of many hundred thousand more who perished of the famine and pestilence that stalked in the train of war. The triumphant King, already shadowed by the piety of his august grandfather, was so overcome with remorse that he proclaimed his folly on tall stone pillars that still stand. He renounced war for ever. It became so grave a concern that no more blood should be shed, that royal writs were issued forbidding the killing of animal or insect. He clutched at the tenets of the faiths that endorsed this. He became a Buddhist. He insisted that all his subjects should become Buddhists, thus giving imperial patronage to a sect which in the two hundred years since the Buddha's death had known nothing but persecution and contumely for its heresy. Fresh Asokan edicts were issued. The new State religion was proclaimed on pillars of magnificently wrought stone, set up at the Emperor's command all over his vast kingdom. Missionaries were sent to preach the new gospel everywhere—in Greece, China, Burma and Ceylon, and in Egypt. Where they did not win converts they paved the way for Christianity and Islam. "His Majesty," it was

said, "thinks nothing of much importance save that which concerns the next world." For Asoka believed "the only true conquest is the conquest of self."

Religion slowly caught more and more of the populace in its snare. The world no longer mattered. Idealism ruled. The people became unwary, even indifferent to the national welfare. They relied upon the gods for their defence. A prayer was held to be more powerful than an army. Such armies as remained became lax and inefficient. The country fell a prey to every unscrupulous rogue both within and from beyond the frontiers. A vast part of the populace took refuge in the monasteries, where they received spiritual solace but no protection at all from the invaders, who burnt and killed and plundered as they advanced. Religion devitalised the people. Meditation was preferred to manly pursuits. Karma alone mattered : the balance of good and evil in each life, which determined whether one returned as animal, insect or god.

Asoka himself retired for meditation into a Buddhist monastery every year. His daughter became a nun. His brother went as a missionary to Ceylon.

4

Asoka had not been dead long when fresh hordes came thundering across the frontiers. The odd assortment of races under his rule drifted apart and India became again a patchwork of nations, which, since there are always the ambitious to bid for power, were soon at each other's throats. Every victory brought fresh massacres. Every change of ruler a fresh religion. The devout suffered martyrdom sooner than surrender. Outlaws abounded. River pirates lurked in every river bend. Through the north-western passes Scythians, Bactrians, Parthians and Sakas poured in to seize what they could of India. For three hundred years conditions in India

were chaotic. Such were the ashes of Chandragupta's proud but brief empire.

At the dawn of the Christian era a race from Northern China, the Yueh-chi, brought stability again to India. They battled with a Dravidian kingdom of the Deccan for the mastery of the north, and succeeded in founding the Kushan dynasty, which gave the country peace, good government and an opportunity for trade. Ambassadors were sent to the Roman emperors, with tigers, cheetahs and elephants as gifts. These unfamiliar animals were put into the gladiatorial shows to amuse the Romans. A treaty of alliance was signed with Augustus. The Romans surrendered themselves to the luxuries of the East, clamouring for more perfumes and still more spices, paying fantastic prices for Indian silks and brocades, so much so that Pliny, himself a lover of luxury, denounced their extravagance for the drain India was making on Roman wealth.

These Chinese ruled India for nearly three hundred years—longer than the English have, longer even than the Moguls. When their strong arm collapsed the old chaos returned. The country split up again into its hundred fragments, each warring with the other ; and the people, desirous only to be left to work out their own salvation in monastery and temple, were drawn despite themselves into the bloodshed and the general slaughter.

From this chaos in A.D. 320 a new Hindu dynasty emerged, led, extraordinarily enough, by a new Chandragupta, aided by a fortuitous marriage. It brought a national revival. All foreigners were expelled. It put an end also to such Buddhism as lingered. The Hindus had been engaged during these dim centuries in reasserting themselves. Buddhism had caused the eclipse of the priestcraft. The Brahmins, powerful for over two thousand years, with the souls and destinies of millions in their palms, had not the slightest intention of allowing

Buddhism to linger for an hour after Asoka ceased to bolster it up.

It was a purified Hinduism now ; for the drip of Buddhism upon it through so many centuries had worn away some of the crude superstitions and rituals. But it was still a Hinduism with the full rigour of caste exclusiveness, compelling some of the lowly born to cry out in warning so that the rest should not be polluted by their passing. It was a Puritanical Hinduism : with all animal food taboo ; the saloons closed ; gambling forbidden.

The Gupta era thus ushered in spread its claws to east and west to recover the whole of the earlier Chandraguptan empire. The warrior kings, ambitious, worldly, less scrupulous than the Buddhists, embarked upon grandiose schemes of aggression. Even expansion by the barbarous procedure of horse sacrifice was revived. A young horse, chosen for its auspicious marks and colour, was led to the frontier and released, after thousands of Brahmin priests had blessed it. Wherever it wandered there the imperial armies went. Each country the horse entered was in duty bound to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Guptas. Those who resisted were fought. There was a ruthless uprooting of Rajahs. But, despite this, successive generations of Gupta kings failed to bring more than a third of the first Indian empire under their sway.

Yet this was the heyday of Hindu rule, the golden age for which romanticists still sigh. There was religious toleration and good government. Art and literature flourished. The vernaculars used by the Buddhists were replaced by Sanskrit, the sacred language of the Brahmins. Poets and dramatists engaged in great activity and enjoyed the patronage of the Court. Literature of the finest quality was produced. Kalidasa, greatest of India's writers, passed from his descriptive lyrics to poetic dramas, and gave the world and posterity "Sakuntala." What little has survived of Hindu art displays the masterly

design, the exquisite beauty, the grace, the dignity and the restraint that proclaim its excellence. It is approached by nothing India has produced since. But, alas, the waves of conquest have left no more for us than the frescoes in the caves of Ajanta and the mural paintings at Bagh in Gwalior. Architecture too attained extraordinary excellence. Magnificent stone temples were built, ornamented with most beautiful sculpture. In metal work as revealed in the large copper images of Buddha, in music, in philosophy and in science the progress was so brisk that the Western world engaged in a lively interchange of ideas with India. Learned works were produced on mathematics and astronomy.

Yet it was not an age without poverty. Kings and noblemen enjoyed immense wealth; but the masses went on battling with distress, consoled by the priestly whisper that better times would come not in this life but the next.

Those who took up religion as a career fared well. The monasteries were not the drab, hideous enclosures one associates with ascetics, but lordly mansions with pillared halls and pavilions. The walls were heavily carved and ablaze with gems. There were lovely gardens with serpentine canals nursing dainty blue lotuses. Fountains sparkled in play. There were mango groves and rich fruit orchards. Every monastery provided a heaven upon earth, and there were 10,000 such monasteries all over India.

Even outside these secluded paradises religion ordered and dominated everyday life. The temples were the schools, providing both religious and secular education. They supplied even the amusements of the populace, for to each temple was attached a hall for theatrical diversion. Imagine a cinema as an annex to every church with a few psalms sung as the price of admission. Public works were shifted from governmental shoulders on to the

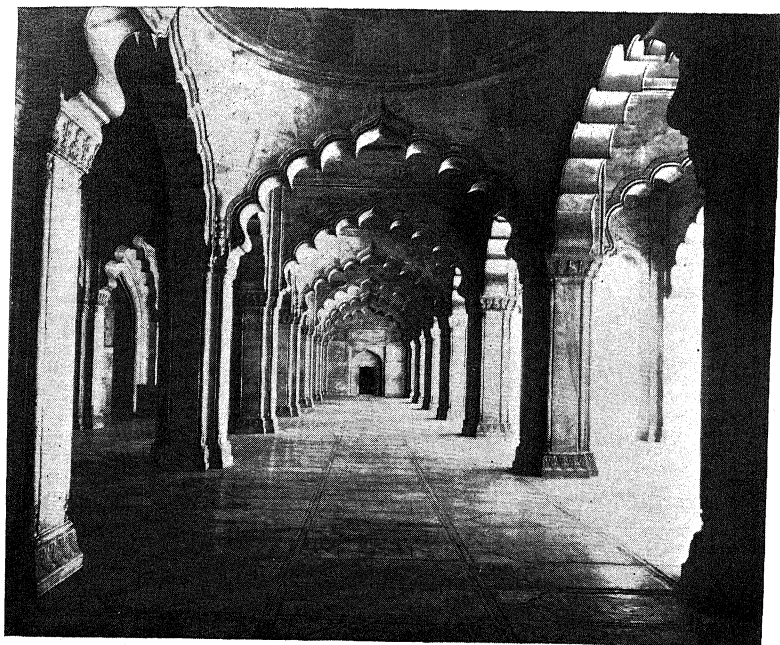
consciences of the people. The repair of roads, the provision of shelters for wayfarers, the making of wells were encouraged by priestly promises of reward, not in this world but the next.

Then conquering hordes poured again through the passes and all the wonder and the glory of the Guptas lay in ashes. The golden age endured no more than a hundred and fifty years.

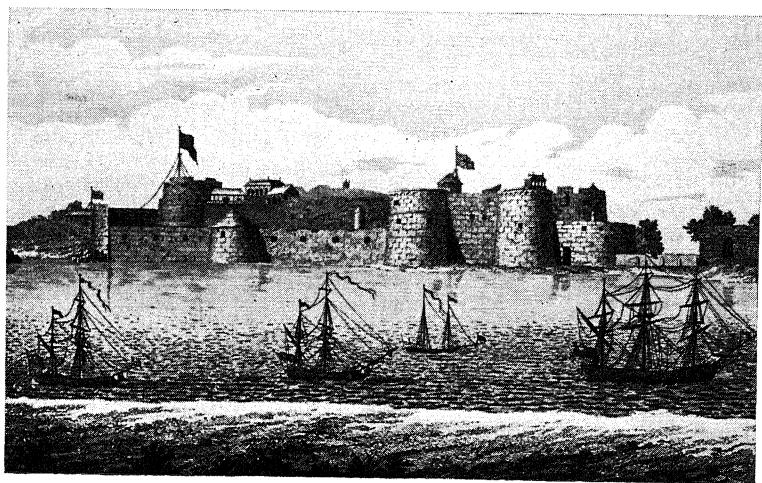
It was the Huns this time. As fierce, barbaric and cruel as the Huns who had swept across Europe with Attila. They re-enacted here all their customary frightfulness. War was waged on non-combatants. Atrocities were committed. Monasteries were looted. Asoka's proud capital was reduced to ruins. It was said one could tell the approach of the Huns by the vultures that flew ahead. The general havoc was so great that every link with the past seemed suddenly to be severed. No family or clan traditions can be traced back beyond these Hun invasions. All the earlier dynasties vanished too. For a century India suffered helplessly these appalling incursions and the chaos they produced.

Order emerged again under Harasha, a young Rajah of a town near Delhi, whose father had succeeded in subjugating all his neighbours. Harasha was no more than sixteen at the time. He had an uphill fight. For five years, we are told, neither his elephants were unharnessed nor his soldiers unhelmeted. He succeeded at length in bringing almost all upper India under his rule. But on his death the entire structure collapsed. There was an invasion from Tibet, and a part of the northern plains was occupied. The petty States of India then began to rearrange themselves with the usual slaughter.

One would have thought that India had suffered enough conquest. But the worst was still to come. Within a few years of Harasha's death the first of the Moslem hordes swept in ; and they continued to come for seven centuries.



INTERIOR OF THE PEARL MOSQUE AT AGRA



SURAT AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST LANDING OF THE ENGLISH
(*British Museum*)

5

Mohammedanism had the one ingredient that every other religion lacked: it fostered martial ardour and spurred the devout on to the conquest of the infidel. It discouraged all love of neighbours, unless the neighbours happened to be of the same faith. It preached no forgiveness of enemies, no retirement from the world into meditative seclusion. Conversion was its creed. Bloodshed almost a part of its ritual. It showered a benediction upon every bandit, provided the raid was made in the name of Islam. It encouraged every predatory scoundrel to adventure and seize what he pleased. "Make war," says the Koran, "upon infidels and unbelievers and treat them with severity." That is why within a few years of Mahomet's death, it produced the greatest religious upheaval the world has known. Moslem hordes, carrying all before them, ruled from the Atlantic to India, from the Nile to the Caspian, including almost all Asia, all the North African littoral, the Balkans, Spain, Portugal and the fertile South of France.

India was invaded by the army of the Caliph of Bagdad in 710. At its head was an Arab boy of seventeen, Mahommed ibn Kasim. The invaders were inspired by a missionary zeal that baulked at no violence. Their fanatical hate was visited upon the idolatrous Hindus, many of whom were forcibly circumcised. The young general's enthusiasm and success deserved better of his Caliph than the dire punishment that was visited upon him. He had even ventured to offer his lord two beauteous maidens for the royal harem—daughters of a Brahmin king he had deposed. The girls pleased the Caliph, but he frowned ominously when they whispered in his ear what the young general had done. Could it be true? Had the dastardly youth dared to sample their virginity before despatching them to Bagdad? The furious

Caliph, predecessor by fifty years of the great Harun-al-Raschid, sent immediate orders to India. The orders were addressed to Mahommed ibn Kasim himself, who was instructed to wrap himself in raw cowhide, have it carefully sewn up and despatched thus to Bagdad. Such was the lad's touching loyalty to his Caliph that he obeyed the awful order without an instant's hesitation. The cowhide was sewn up. During the journey to Bagdad it dried, contracted and crushed the young victor. His corpse was delivered to the Caliph, who displayed it with pride to the Brahmin girls. But they were horrified. Their consciences rebelled within them. In their remorse they revealed that their tale had been maliciously invented to avenge the death of their father. Kasim had not even attempted to approach them. The confession merely heightened the tragedy. The Caliph had the girls tied to the tails of horses and dragged through Bagdad till they died.¹

India was visited next by hosts of greedy Moslem adventurers who plundered and ill-treated the Hindus. Actually these Arab onslaughts upon India proved of incalculable value to the rest of the world ; for the scholarship of India, its miracles of mathematics, chemistry, astronomy and medicine were disseminated. All Europe began to use Arabic—which was really Indian—figures for its calculations, as the world does to this day.

The next Moslem invader came in 1000. Mahmud of Ghazni was the son of a Turkish slave who had begun his apprenticeship to war at the immature age of ten. He was not concerned with conquest. He came solely for plunder, and so fruitful did the temples of India prove that he came every winter to strip them of their golden images and the priceless gems hidden in their treasuries. These

¹ Other accounts state that Mahommed ibn Kasim did not die in this manner but was tortured to death with all his relatives two or three years later.

annual marauding expeditions became in time a State function. Once Mahmud took back 200,000 captives for the harems of the faithful and for the slave markets of Central Asia. The sacred cities of the Hindus were defiled—Taneshar, Mathura, Kanauj, even Somnath. The temples were burned with naphtha and fire. At Somnath, thousands of pious Hindus rushed up to Shiva's shrine and begged fervently to be saved. The gods were silent. In despair some of the priests took to the sea in open boats, but the Mohammedans pursued and killed them. Fifty thousand Hindus perished in this onslaught and the pious offerings of centuries were borne away to the rude uplands of Central Asia: canopies set with pearls and precious stones, exquisitely jewelled lamps, and Shiva's obscene symbol, the lingam, also studded with gems, to serve as doorstep to the Mosque of the Celestial Bride. It seems incredible yet is true that a large force of Hindu cavalry served in the armies of this desecrating vandal, whose sole aim was the destruction of everything Hindu.

The only serious reverse recorded by history of these rough-riders of Islam was encountered a century and a half later when an Afghan Sultan, burning and pillaging his way across Northern India, met with a disastrous defeat near Taneshar. He himself escaped with difficulty. A faithful servant, weak and faint from wounds, bore his injured master off the field to safety. When the Afghan returned to his mountain lair, in his fury, he tied horses' nosebags about his generals' necks and marched them thus through the streets, munching corn. The following year one of these humiliated generals retrieved the situation by plundering Benares and defiling its thousand temples.

Soon many Moslem kingdoms were established by adventurers all over Northern India. They ruled as despots, indulged in debauchery, fought against each other and crushed the Hindus with heavy taxation, which in the

general confusion the officials misappropriated, so that the writhing subjects had to be mulcted again for the benefit of the State. Every swaggerer in Court coveted the throne. Camps became whispering-galleries of intrigue. Sultans were suddenly murdered, and a son, a nephew, the commander-in-chief or a cunning slave assumed the rôle of King for a brief spell. The nobles lived in such abject terror that many preferred not to speak at all, but communicated with each other by signs.

The greatest of these tyrants was Ala-ud-Din, who waded to the throne of Delhi through the blood of his uncle and a cousin at the close of the thirteenth century. In cruelty he is comparable with Nero and with a Hun king of India named Mihiragula. He crushed not only the infidel, but even his own people, whose slaughter could surely not have brought the same comforting glow to his conscience. Thousands of Mogul Moslems brought in as prisoners were thrown under the pounding feet of elephants. He strove to bring all India under his terrible rule, and in a measure succeeded. He tore through Southern India, returning with incalculable spoils. Then a strange magalomania overcame him. He insisted on being referred to as a second Alexander. The one pleasing feature of his rule was his short way with profiteers. Inspectors spied on the bazaar-keepers to see that full measure was given. Whenever a deficiency was detected it was made good with a proportionate slice off the offender's haunches. The penalty proved so disconcerting that traders began to give a liberal measure of overweight.

Ala-ud-Din's death was followed by the usual scramble for power, in the course of which his two sons had their eyes put out by a wily general, who contrived to worm himself on to the throne. But he did not stay there long. He was struck down by an assassin, and a third son of Ala-ud-Din succeeded, a worthless, effeminate nincompoop, who, it is recorded by that Mohammedan historian

Ferishta, "became infamous for every vice that can disgrace human nature, and condescended so far as to dress himself often like a common actress and go with the public women to dance at the houses of the nobility."

Seven years later a far more dangerous imbecile sat upon that same throne. Mohommed Tughlak, descended from a line of Turkish slaves, was the victim unquestionably of a disordered brain. He indulged in the most fantastic ceremonials. Once he had one of his teeth buried with pomp and dignity. Above the grave an imposing monument was reared, for all to wonder at and bow their heads to in worship. Next he conceived the wild project of conquering China. Disregarding the pleas of his entire military council and his generals, he despatched an army of 100,000 men on this absurd adventure. A mere handful returned. The Sultan was so angry that his plans should have miscarried that he ordered the instant execution of the remnant. Their heads were accordingly struck off.

His next project was even more ridiculous. He conceived the idea of removing his capital from Delhi to Deoghur; and not only the capital, but the entire population of Delhi—men, women and children, with all their movable property. He ordered that not a dog or cat should be left behind. The distance between the two cities is over 600 miles and in ordinary circumstances a forty days' march.

So that nobody should disobey, the King sent his soldiers to ferret them out of their houses and their hiding-places. Two men were found lurking in the narrow streets of the deserted city. One was lame and the other blind. The lame man was hurled over a precipice to his death. The blind man was dragged by the foot all the way from Delhi to Deoghur. Bit by bit he was worn away, so that no more of him than the foot

arrived.¹ The sufferings endured by the rest during that long trek may well be imagined. Many died, others suffered the most awful privations. At Deoghur itself, grandiosely rechristened Daulatabad, they found no means whatever of subsistence. The Sultan had laid out the new capital on a magnificent scale. Trees had been planted. Pleasure gardens bloomed everywhere. But the victims of his caprice merely groaned and perished. Two years later, even the Sultan realised his folly. It was no use. So new orders were issued. Back they all had to go to Delhi, lock, stock and barrel, women, children and dogs. The same old trek all over again. But when the empty streets of Delhi echoed again with human feet and voices, there was in it but a fraction of the old population. The others had been left in graves in Deoghur.

This mad Sultan's crowning folly was his remoulding of the currency. Copper discs were issued and elevated by imperial decree to the full value of gold and silver. Every metal worker quickly took advantage of the opportunity. In the villages secret mints were set up ; the whole population was soon engaged in defrauding the treasury. The State was speedily brought to the verge of ruin. Then suddenly the Sultan decided to turn, as with the wave of a wand, this disastrous tide. The stupid decree was repealed. All the copper tokens were called in, full payment in genuine coins of gold and silver being offered in exchange.

This merely served to aggravate the plight of the State. The worthless metal discs were brought in in such numbers that they rose in heaps like mountains about the bewildered clerks.²

The treasury could not meet such liabilities. The wily had amassed fortunes. The rest of the country was ruined. Many peasants in despair set fire to their homes and took refuge in the forests.

¹ Ibn Batuta.

² Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi.

It was with considerable relief that news was received some years later of this mad sovereign's death. His nephew succeeded—a stern Puritan, who refused to countenance the worship of obscene symbols by the Hindus. An elderly Brahmin who had been accused of the perversion of Moslem women was ordered to be burnt alive. But on the whole this was a humane ruler, who did much to alleviate the sufferings of the people. Upon his death in 1388 the country saw chaos again. The empire broke up. To the Sultan at Delhi was left no more than a few miles around his capital. It was strewn, as it still is, with the wreckage of shattered Delhis.

6

Against the successive Moslem onslaughts of Turk and Pathan and Mogul an epic struggle was waged by the Hindu clan of Rajputs, an aristocratic military caste to whom death was far nobler than surrender. Their rallying point was the famous rock citadel of Chitor, which rises like a man-of-war out of the plains—three miles long, a quarter-mile wide and 500 feet high. Along its scarp sides were bastions. A river guarded its approach and seven stout gates impeded the ascent of its zigzag path. The most stirring dramas of valour and sacrifice were enacted upon this citadel. Even the women were not afraid of buckling on a sword and facing the enemy. When the Rajput chief fell before the advancing Moslems in 1193, his queen took command of the army and saved the citadel.

A hundred years later Ala-ud-Din, hearing of the beauty of a Rajput princess named Padmini, resolved to take her from her husband by force. He besieged the fort, but Chitor proved too strong. So he covered his embarrassment by declaring that if he were but allowed to see Padmini's face in a mirror he would depart. The Rajputs

conferred and decided to grant his request. Ala-ud-Din entered Chitor alone, for he knew he could rely upon the word of a Rajput. There, within a mirror, he beheld the lovely face and all but swooned. More resolved than ever was he now to take her away. But he could not act alone. The visit over, Padmini's husband, with an old-world courtesy, escorted the guest to his camp at the foot of the hill. Here, at a signal, Ala-ud-Din's men pounced upon the unsuspecting husband and held him as hostage. The price of his ransom, it was proclaimed, would be nothing less than Padmini herself.

The Rajputs, after a show of hesitation, pretended to agree. They had Padmini (presumably) borne in great state in a litter with the customarily large escort of handmaidens. But the litter did not contain Padmini, and the handmaidens proved to be seven hundred valiant warriors. It was a new version of the horse of Troy. A sharp fight ensued, and though many lives were lost, in the confusion the Rajput chief was able to dash breathlessly back to the lovely Padmini.

But the ardour of Ala-ud-Din would not be stayed. He departed only to assemble a vast army, which he hurled again and again and still again at the rock. The Rajputs offered an heroic resistance. But the enemy were too numerous to repel. One after the other the Rajputs fell like ninepins. The Rana himself had lost no fewer than eleven of his twelve sons. The twelfth, on the father's insistence, at last escaped so that he might carry on the line when better days should come. It was obvious now that the end had arrived. Chitor, which had stood firm against so many fierce assaults, could hold out no more. So the women prepared in the subterranean vaults a colossal funeral pyre, into which they flung themselves to save their honour.¹ The men donned the saffron

¹ Some accounts state that Padmini did not perish in the flames, but lived to be the subject of further negotiations with the captor of Chitor for the restoration of the citadel.

robes of sacrifice and rushed, sword in hand, against the enemy. Very few succeeded in cutting their way through to the hills beyond.

It was an empty triumph when Chitor fell.

7

And now we come to the Moguls. Originally just a small tribe of nomadic horsemen in Mongolia, the same country as had cradled the Turks and the Huns, they became under the inspiring leadership of Genghiz Khan an Asiatic menace and a world force. Living in tents, subsisting for the most part on mare's milk, they galloped with their whirling swords at the heels of this fearless half-savage, who had taken the trouble to learn military science from the Chinese, and to evolve the greatest fighting machine the world was to know until the coming of Napoleon. With this, eight hundred years before the Corsican was born, Genghiz Khan acquired an empire that was greater than either Alexander's or Napoleon's. He took Peking. Then Kashgar, Bokhara, Samarkand. He penetrated even to Lahore. He defeated the Russian armies after a series of fierce battles, and ruled from the Pacific to the Dnieper. After his death almost all Russia was added. Poland and Hungary were ravaged. Battles were fought with the Germans. Seventy years later this vast empire split up. The Chinese Moguls turned to Buddhism. The rest became Moslems.

Timur the Lame, known to the West as Tamerlane, claimed to be a descendant of Genghiz Khan. He himself was a Moslem. Amid the barbaric splendour of Samarkand, with its golden domes, its towers of blue porcelain, its dreaming mosques, its formidable gates and its bazaars with rich fabrics and damascened swords, he planned to rebuild the empire of his famous ancestor. He left the soft luxury of his palace and galloped with his horsemen

across the wild crags of highland Asia, the dark valleys, the roaring torrents, and down through the mountain passes into India. In the chaos that had followed the death of the mad Mohommed Tughlak's successor he saw his opportunity of conquest. It mattered not to him that the bulk of that country was under Moslem rule. There were still Hindu infidels to slay and Timur insisted on slaying them, even if he crushed under heel those of his co-religionists who played at kingship over petty principalities.

So with this impudent message he swept into the inviting plains of India: "If the rulers of Hindustan come before me with tribute I will not interfere with their lives, property or kingdoms; but if they are negligent in proffering obedience and submission, I will put forth my strength for the conquest of the kingdoms of India."

Timur's progress was dyed with far more blood than had ever been shed before in the long and lurid annals of India. A lover of the open air, he had a contempt for towns and those who dwelt in them. He regarded the towns as festering sores, to be destroyed; the people as decadent, vicious, despicable. So he made short work of both, leaving ruin and desolation wherever he went. Civilisation suffered an indescribable set-back. Priceless treasures of art and architecture were destroyed. Timur had no intention of living in the country. "If we establish ourselves permanently therein," he said, "our race will degenerate and our children will become like the natives of those regions, and in a few years their strength and valour will diminish." He came for loot—and to win favour in Heaven by the destruction of temples and the slaughter of idolators. There was a general massacre of all inhabitants on an island in the River Jehlum. At Tulamba thousands more were slain because of a scarcity of provisions. At Bhatnir, a ghastly pyramid of 10,000

heads was reared and all the houses were set on fire. Women and children were generally borne away as slaves, but faced with a battle in front of Delhi, he felt himself handicapped by their numbers. So 100,000 of the slaves were slaughtered in cold blood. Delhi was entered with tears of joy in the brutal conqueror's eyes and a prayer of thankfulness on his lips. But while festivities were being held at Court, the Mogul soldiers indulged in a five-day butchery—slaying, plundering, destroying. Gold and silver ornaments were torn off Hindu women. Untold slaves were taken. Every soldier found himself with no fewer than twenty. Timur stayed in Delhi for only fifteen days, and then returned to Samarkand. He was already sixty-three years old, a victim of chronic rheumatism. He died not long after.

He left a Viceroy to rule India, but Afghan adventurers swept this henchman off the throne of Delhi. In their turn they were attacked and driven out a century later by Timur's very able descendant, Babur, who, unlike his savage ancestor, had every resolve to remain and rule in person in India. In 1526, on the field of Panipat, destined to become the historic battle-ground of the future, Babur's small army of only 12,000 horse found itself confronted by a force of more than ten times that number. But Babur, an astute tactician, had taken the precaution of solidifying his position. Had his opponent been equal to him in strategy he would have attacked Babur's lines of communication. But foolishly, confident no doubt of his superior strength, the Afghan hurled his forces against Babur. The Mogul let them come on, then wheeled his reserves round to their rear so that in a twinkling they found themselves completely surrounded. Then the slaughter began. The Afghan Sultan and 50,000 of his men were killed. And the way lay open to Delhi for Babur and the Moguls.

Already, even before Babur's coming, the Portuguese

had landed in India, and had been engaged in establishing settlements along the western littoral of the Deccan. Almost every settlement came under a different Indian ruler, for within that triangle of the south, which lay cut off by tall mountains and roaring rivers from the rest of India, there were still an abundance of small States, each warring with its neighbour. The Moslems had penetrated the barriers and had set up many kingdoms. They battled for dominance here not only with the Hindu Rajahs, but even with each other. Chief of these warring States was the ancient Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar, which for two centuries had upheld the finest traditions of Aryan civilisation in Southern India; and Bijapur, a Moslem State, offshoot of a Turkish conquest.

The trouble between them started with an impudent demand after a drunken revel at the Moslem Court, which here as elsewhere ignored the Prophet's ban on alcohol. When the merriment was over the incoherent Moslem ruler, as a jest, gave his musicians a demand for payment to take to the Rajah of Vijayanagar. "Show it to him," he laughed, "and ask him to pay it." The Hindu Rajah dealt with the insult as it deserved. He placed the messenger on an ass and had him led through the streets for the people to laugh at. As a further expression of his resentment he invaded Moslem territory and put the frontier garrison to the sword. This plunged the two countries into a war which took a heavy toll of life on both sides. Nor, in spite of all pleas, would the Moslems listen to peace until the musicians' bill was paid. They dwelt more or less in peace after that until in 1564 four Moslem States combined against the unfortunate Hindus. After a fierce battle, when the great river ran red with blood, the lovely city of Vijayanagar was laid waste. Nothing remains of it to-day but a heap of ruins. Exquisite stone sculpture, magnificent pavilions from which the kings once watched the fêtes, gorgeously

decorated temples, were smashed up with crowbars and axes.

No land in the world can have suffered so much havoc as India has known during the thousand years of Moslem conquest and settlement.

8

Babur did not live five years after his capture of Delhi. He was at the height of his glory and power when, seeing his beloved son Humayun dying, he prayed fervently, begging that Allah should spare the boy's life and take his own instead. The ministers protested. The death of Babur would bring on serious consequences. They suggested alternative sacrifices. But Babur was firm. He renewed his prayer. He fell ill soon after, and extraordinarily enough, as he got weaker the boy grew stronger. The very day the boy was able to rise from his bed, Babur died. Many questioned whether the sacrifice was worth while, for Humayun, despite great personal valour, was unable to hold the throne against the challenging swords of his brothers and other intriguers. It was taken from him ultimately by an Afghan who had been living in Bengal. Pretending to serve him, the treacherous wretch turned against his king and drove him out. The exiled Emperor, a fugitive from Delhi, stalked by assassins, met a lovely Persian girl and fell in love. He had nothing to offer her save the haunting shadow of death that pursues every fugitive ruler. But, as she loved him too, they married and chanced the future. Their honeymoon was the most awful that ever bride had to endure. From place to place they flitted, suffering terrible privations, until months later they came to a desert. On the other side they had vague hopes of finding a refuge in the palace of a Rajput prince. So they pressed on, travelling with their small band of retainers by night and by day.

But the desert was wider than they had expected and without oases. Their mouths grew dry. Slowly their energy failed. Some died of thirst. Others went mad. The rest staggered into Amarkot, where the fugitive bride gave birth to a son—Akbar, destined to be one of the greatest of all rulers of India.

Humayun lived in exile for over a dozen years, biding his time. When India split up again into warring factions (as all knew it must), he made a bid for power and recovered his throne. He ruled, however, for barely six months. Using the stairs one day he had the misfortune to fall all the way down, some say in a fit of drunkenness, others in a narcotic stupor, for he was a heavy opium smoker. That was his end.

Akbar was little more than thirteen years old at the time, but he was able not only to mount the throne despite the many conspirators, but to hold it for fifty years with statesmanship and vigour. During this long reign he evolved a new India which rivalled, if it did not eclipse, the glories of the golden Hindu era. He extended the inherited domain, spreading a little into Southern India. He put an end to the persecution of the Hindus. He showed sympathy with their aspirations and great toleration for their religious ceremonials. All the old imposts on Hindu pilgrims and the taxes on idolators were abolished. He formed matrimonial alliances with Hindu ruling families and gave to Rajputs some of the highest positions in his army. His ambition was to fuse the discordant races of India. The country enjoyed peace and prosperity. The peasants were protected from the plundering landowners, who in return showed him nothing but disaffection. He was impartial and humane. No cruelty of any sort was permitted. His tastes were moderate. His absorbing passion was a love of gardens and beautiful palaces. He laid out a dream capital at Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra, which is to-day in ruins, a

resort of tourists. In its deserted streets but a few years ago an English child was killed by a panther.

“Like the prophets,” Akbar was illiterate. Yet all his pursuits were intellectual. He assembled each Thursday afternoon all the learned men to engage in a discourse on philosophy and religion. He was familiar with the literature of the Hindus and the Persians, which had to be read to him. His father’s long residence in Herat, with its luxury and culture, led to artists, poets, architects, wits and musicians being invited later to the Court at Delhi. Akbar gave them his patronage. He had a deep love for painting. He could himself draw, for he had been taught in childhood by the artists his father had brought back from Persia. Around these he established the Mogul school of art. Hindu artists were attracted and in time outnumbered the Persians. They delighted in portraying the contemporary scene—miniature pictures, rich in colour, crowded in detail. The Emperor’s example fired local Rajahs with the desire to encourage Hindu artists at their own courts.

One of the most energetic figures in history, short, broad-shouldered, with flowing moustaches, a loud voice, quick movements, his head always held to one side, Akbar took a lively interest in all religions. He flirted with Christianity and Hinduism so ardently* that it was fully believed he would be won over to one or the other. But his desire was essentially to evolve a faith for the peoples of India that would put an end at last to the feuds that separated Hindu from Moslem. Like Harun-al-Raschid, he loved wandering at night through the streets, mixing with his subjects and learning their opinion of things. Once he was recognised, but he instantly distorted his supple features, squinted his eyes and walked off. He never needed more than three hours’ sleep a day, and lived on but one daily meal—and that at no fixed time. He was fond of an outdoor life : rode, played polo and went

hunting. His chief diversion in town was chess. He played this on a colossal board in the courtyard, using beautiful slave girls as living pieces.

From the four thousand years of disorder we have viewed, but few names emerge—Chandragupta, who reared an empire on the ruins of Alexander's ; his grandson, the great Asoka, who fostered Buddhism and helped to make it a world religion ; then a second Chandragupta, ushering in the glory of the Hindu era ; and now, after the long chaos of Moslem ambition, Akbar.

He was followed by his son Jehanghir, in whose reign, as we have seen, Captain Hawkins visited Agra to plead for trading facilities for the newly formed East India Company. Next came Shah Jehan, whose love for the beautiful princess his incontinence had killed by child-bearing, is told in the lovely marble of the Taj Mahal. Then Aurungzebe, who for a brief spell ruled all India.

But the vigour of the Moguls had begun to decline. What Timur had foreseen indeed came to pass : " If we establish ourselves permanently therein, our race will degenerate." Slowly the Mogul Empire broke up. Marauding horsemen from Central India banded themselves together under Shivaji and swept north and south for plunder. Through the lofty passes of the north-west again Afghans poured in.

The English, dwelling along the coast as traders, found their markets in disorder, trade at a standstill. In struggling with the chaos, despite themselves, they won an empire.

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CHAPTER III

RULE BRITANNIA

I

AN extraordinary contrast to this appalling record of slaughter and loot, spread over four thousand years of India's history, is provided by Britain's association with India.

The Portuguese, as we have seen, adhered to the traditions of conquest—at Goa, at Surat, and all along India's western coast. It was the tradition applied by them in their annexation of Brazil and by the Spaniards in the ruthless uprooting of two old civilisations on the American continents—the Aztecs in Mexico, destroyed by Cortes in 1519, and the Incas in Peru, destroyed by Pizarro in 1530. In each case there was wholesale plunder, the ill-treatment and enslavement of the natives, and an uninterrupted flow of gold and silver in shiploads to the homeland.

The British came to India, as we have observed, solely as traders; and the greatest difficulty was encountered in obtaining permission to trade; not through any suspicion or hostility on the part of the Mogul Emperor or of the rulers of the petty States concerned, but because of the malice of the Portuguese, who denounced all Englishmen as spies and thieves. Not in their wildest dreams did the British aspire to rule India. Their only representatives were servants of a trading company, intent chiefly on obtaining profits for the shareholders. Political entanglements were outside their concern. They settled with timidity on small plots of land bought or leased on the utter fringe of the continent and were at the mercy of every marauder and at the whim of every prince-ling, who had to be bribed to be kept from spoliation. But from time to time greed overcame every plea and payment. The entire white population was massacred and their possessions confiscated. The machinations of other

European traders, their intrigues with the native rulers, the general chaos that made life insecure, the crack and clatter of the collapsing Mogul Empire caught the British, despite every effort on their part to keep clear, and sucked them into the vortex.

In Surat, where the British began as traders, the Dutch came a year later, and after them the French. Wherever the British established a factory—on the Malabar, on the Coromandel, in Bengal, the French and the Dutch came too. The Dutch did not cause much concern after Cromwell's crushing defeat of them in European waters ; but the French, far more formidable and England's traditional enemy, made it clear from the start that there could not be room for both nations even as traders on the Indian continent. So with every news of fresh fighting in Europe, the French and English traders in every small settlement in India flew at each other's throats without so much as troubling about the cause of the new European embroilment.

At the opening of this great duel the chief English factories were at Madras, which had been rented and fortified in 1640 ; at Bombay, given by the Portuguese as dowry to the Portuguese bride of King Charles the Second, but so little prized by the merry monarch that he leased it to the East India Company for a mere £10 a year ; and at Calcutta. The French were at Pondicherry, which lay a little south of Madras, and at Chandernagore, near Calcutta. Their Governor at Pondicherry, the wily Dupleix, saw further than every other trader. He was not concerned with commercial opportunity so much as with empire. In the dust of chaos he saw the rich glow of a new French dominion. Gold, brocades, elephants ! The glory of Spain eclipsed ! All Europe agasp with wonder ! While Dupleix rubbed his hands expectantly, awaiting news from home of fresh hostilities between the two nations, he set about strengthening his

fortifications and enrolling an army of Indians under French officers.

His opportunity came in 1746. The War of the Austrian Succession did not even remotely concern India, but the French fleet sailed into Madras and after a severe bombardment of that small settlement for three awful days and nights, seized and held the place to ransom. Every man was taken prisoner.

One of them contrived to escape : a young clerk named Robert Clive, who blackened his face, wound a turban round his head, and sped through the night to the next English settlement, about a hundred miles away.

Clive there joined the small English army, which numbered no more than two or three hundred men, the mercenary scum of Europe and the sweepings of the gaols of England. It was not surprising that Clive, a youth of remarkable valour, should distinguish himself in such company, but what was extraordinary was that, without any knowledge whatever of warfare, he should possess such an uncanny sense of strategy. In a little while, even the surly old councillors, as ever intolerant of the precocity of youth, began to recognise that Clive if anyone was a match for the crafty Dupleix, who had by now dragged a native prince with his vast army into the quarrel. Clive promptly did the same. Soon native battalions, under English and French flags, were fighting each other all over Southern India. The conflict lasted for years. From it Clive emerged victorious, after an heroic struggle against overwhelming odds and the most remarkable escapes from death ever crowded into a young life. The French power in the south was thus crushed. Dupleix, who had posed as "Viceroy of the Grand Mogul" and had dressed himself in the gold spangles of Mogul impressiveness, was foiled. His newly founded Town of the Victory of Dupleix was reduced by Clive to a heap of ruins. No more than twenty-eight years of age, Clive

became the hero of the British in India. He was hailed by the elder Pitt as that "Heaven-born General" and was the toast at every dinner in England. The grateful East India Company presented him with a sword studded with diamonds.

Britain, after battling with the Portuguese for the right to trade, had to crush the French to exercise that right.

2

The scene changes now to Bengal, where, without any provocation at all, an insensate and cruel native prince, Suraj-ud-Dowlah, struggling free of the control of the Mogul, planned to seize the rich merchandise in the English warehouses in Calcutta. Swiftly he descended on that small colony and destroyed it. The horror of the culminating cruelty—that awful night of the 20th of June, 1756, spent in agony and death in the Black Hole of Calcutta by 146 English men and women, of whom only twenty-three emerged alive after scrambling all night over the bodies of their dead and dying friends to quench a ghastly thirst with each other's sweat-sodden sleeves—will be remembered as long as the English language is spoken.

The hero of Southern India, Clive, just returned from the fuss and fêting of England, was sent to Bengal to punish Suraj-ud-Dowlah. A pitiful scene met his eyes. In miserable huts, their clothes in tatters, their forms emaciated with hunger, the gentlemen and ladies of Calcutta, fugitives from the ferocity of Suraj-ud-Dowlah, awaited on the edge of Bengal for ships to take them away. Clive marched briskly on Calcutta and recaptured it. It was his resolve not to leave upon the throne so irresponsible a ruler, uncouth, licentious, vicious, merciless. He would have to be removed and an abler man set up in his place. An uncle of the young Nawab was

willing to assume the glory ; and at the battle of Plassey, fought a year almost to the day after the Black Hole of Calcutta, Clive inflicted so crushing a defeat upon the Nawab that all Bengal lay within his grasp. But he adhered to his pledge. Suraj-ud-Dowlah was dragged off the *gadi* to the intense relief of the entire population of Bengal, who had groaned for months under his tyrant heel ; and the new Nawab was enthroned.

But the Mogul Emperor, a limp, pathetic shadow of vanished greatness, wished it had been otherwise. He begged Clive to take over the province himself. He was tired of these unruly Nawabs who no longer troubled to pay him his dues. All Bengal and the neighbouring provinces of Bihar and Orissa he would transfer readily to the English if they guaranteed to hand him a fifth of the revenues. Clive was in favour of this transfer. It would make for better government, peace and security, and ameliorate the condition of the Indians. But the East India Company shirked the responsibility. Eight years later, after the most appalling misrule, resulting from the ill-defined position of the English, they sent Clive back to India to accept it. So in August 1765, with the Emperor seated on a hastily draped arm-chair placed upon an English dining-table in Clive's tent, a first instalment of the Indian Empire was handed over to the East India Company as a " free gift from generation to generation, for ever and ever." The welfare of millions of subject peoples was thus placed in the care of a trading corporation. It was like a department store or a firm of grocers undertaking the government of a large slice of China. But this anomaly did not last long. Within eight years the English Government stepped in.

Meanwhile a brave effort was made by the Company to transform the traders into statesmen. For a time, while the conversion was in progress, the English merchants, understanding only sales and profits and seeing

the old order crumble, grabbed all they could get and left. This era of misrule, conforming with the fullest traditions of India and maintaining a condition to which the peoples were already accustomed, was happily not only short-lived, but vigorously stamped out. Clive, who was entrusted with the thankless task of reform, provoked so many enmities that on his return to England, weary and broken in health, he found himself surrounded by the men he had displaced and punished. Relentlessly they hounded him to his doom. Clive had, after the battle of Plassey, with the full knowledge of the East India Company, accepted a large monetary gift from the Nawab he had elevated to the throne. The Company, who paid miserable salaries, always approved of employees recompensing themselves. But now, a dozen years later, Clive was called before the bar of the House of Commons, of which he was himself a member, to answer the charge of plunder, the very iniquity which he had been engaged in punishing in India. He was blamed for his example ; sneered and spat upon ; subjected to calumny by the very men he had driven from the country ; treated, as he bitterly complained, no better than a sheep-stealer. " Consider the situation," he said, " in which the victory at Plassey had placed me. A great prince was dependent on my pleasure ; an opulent city lay at my mercy ; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles ; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels ! By God, Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation ! "

A vote of censure was passed, but tempered with the tribute that great services had indeed been rendered by Clive to his country. The rebuff, however, was too great for so proud a spirit. It gnawed ceaselessly at his thoughts, until, to escape the haunting memory, Clive resorted to drugs. And then, either by accident or in a fit of dejection,

he swallowed an overdose of opium. A coach had been waiting outside his lordship's magnificent house in Berkeley Square to take him to Bath for the waters. Clive retired to his closet to dress. A crash was heard. He was found stretched out on the floor, dead.

3

Warren Hastings was seven years Clive's junior. He too began as a clerk in the service of the East India Company, poring over ledgers and bills of lading. After the sack of Calcutta and the Black Hole, he joined the wretched band of British refugees at Fulta, and here fell in love with and married the widow of an officer who perished miserably in the Black Hole.

After five months of waiting, the pathetic band, their numbers reduced by disease, saw Clive sail upstream with his avenging army. Hastings met him now for the first time. Fired by his example, the young refugee joined the army and marched with a musket on Calcutta. But Hastings was not a soldier by disposition. His careful upbringing, his sensibility, his scholarship, his knowledge of Oriental languages fitted him admirably for the more delicate task of representing the East India Company at the Court of the Nawab. In the course of time, at Clive's recommendation, he became Governor.

The difficulties that confronted Warren Hastings at this juncture seemed insuperable. The transfer to Britain of three vast provinces had been made. They swarmed with millions of alien peoples, different in complexion, language and ideals from those who were to govern them. But the old order still prevailed. Indians sat in high places, filling their pockets with the revenues, lying, intriguing, conspiring, indifferent entirely to the welfare of the masses. The supreme power belonged to the Company, which left the Indians to look after themselves,

while a careful eye was kept by English officials on trade returns, on the figurehead Nawab and on the army. Obviously these conditions could not be allowed to continue. The English would have to shoulder the administration of the country, the collection of the revenue and the dispensation of justice. It became essential to tear down the existing structure and to build anew. And that was not all. Not only was the internal administration of these ceded provinces their concern. All round the borders hovered the human wolves, called into being by the collapse of the Mogul arm. Delhi had already been sacked by that Persian upstart Nadir Shah, who sat and watched with sublime satisfaction the indiscriminate massacre of the inhabitants for nine hours. Every man's wealth was forfeit. It took the Shah two months to pack the assembled treasures. He bore away too the famous Peacock Throne made for Shah Jehan from the enormous store of the imperial jewel vaults. This throne was a wonder of the world. Mounted on golden legs, it was girt with twelve emerald pillars, each topped with two peacocks glittering with the rarest gems. Between the birds upon each pillar was a tree covered with diamonds, emeralds, pearls and rubies. It cost many millions of pounds to construct. Having secured so much of its wealth, Nadir Shah was content to leave the country to its fate.

Elsewhere in India there was chaos. Every swaggering adventurer buckled on a sword and rode with a plundering mob at his heels to prey upon the peasantry, to loot the homes of the rich and to raid the bazaars in town and village. There were also countless criminal gangs, raiding and murdering indiscriminately; and, more formidable even than these, the marauding horsemen of the Mahrattas, rallied two hundred years before by Shivaji from their highland haunts in Central India. North and south they swept, looting and terrorising;

prepared to follow every swashbuckler, to engage in every combat for the prize it offered. In the general chaos and desolation, they had contrived to seize power and were now ruling three or four States of varying size. At intervals one or other of these murderous hordes swept into Bengal, defying the British armies to do their worst. It was Warren Hastings' desire to protect the peoples his Company had undertaken to rule. It seemed enough for his purpose to keep these raiders from plunging across the frontier; and that in truth was difficult enough. Neighbouring States had to be subsidised to keep the Mahrattas at arm's length. The army had to be on the alert. Even within the territories under his rule there were lawless hordes, dealing out death and destruction.

Any idea that the English were profiting by these acquisitions would be entirely wide of the truth. No financial advantage at all accrued to the shareholders of the East India Company. Indeed the sweeping reforms in the administration and the cost of defence swallowed up not only all the revenues of the three ceded provinces, but even the profits of trade. The shareholders got nothing. Driven to distraction after years of restless waiting, deeper and deeper in debt despite every effort to keep clear of political complications, the East India Company appealed at last to Parliament for a loan to tide them over their difficulties; and thus brought about their heads the leading-strings of parliamentary control. A few years later in 1784 a Board of Control was appointed, the President of which was in time to blossom into the Secretary of State for India.

At the same time, in order to unify the scattered English settlements, Warren Hastings was designated Governor-General, with authority over Madras and Bombay. One result of this change was a war with the Mahrattas, into which, after striving for years to avoid a conflict, he was dragged by the impetuosity of Bombay. With this

entanglement on hand, he was tricked by Madras into still another war, with Hyder Ali and his son Tipoo Sultan. Ablest and cruellest of the many unscrupulous adventurers who had scrambled for power, Hyder had contrived to seize a throne, and by artifice and terrorism had succeeded in spreading his tentacles across Southern India. Illiterate, bereft of religious scruples, morals or compassion, he relied in every emergency upon cruelty and torture. Flogging was the mildest of the punishments he imposed. From time to time, as a matter of discipline, he had all his highest officers flogged. Once, his son Tipoo, for a trifling fault, was severely whipped in public by his father.

Two expeditions of sepoys were despatched by Hastings through the dark heart of India to Bombay; another marched southward against Hyder. The campaigns proved stubborn. Reverses were encountered. Hyder was assisted by the French, who were also engaged at the time in assisting the American Colonies to revolt against England. Hastings, at his wits' end for money, seized the first favourable opportunity to patch up a peace with the Mahrattas. Some months later, on Hyder's death, he also made his peace with Tipoo. It was, of course, obvious that both these enemies would at the earliest opportunity set upon him again; despite the warning given to Tipoo by his dying father: "Between the English and me there were perhaps mutual grounds of dissatisfaction, but not sufficient cause for war, and I might have made them my friends. The defeat of many Braithwaites and Baillies will not destroy them. I can ruin their resources by land but I cannot dry up the sea, and I must be first weary of war in which I can gain nothing by fighting."

But even without war Hastings had enough to disturb and distract him. He had been imprudent enough to fall in love with a married woman during a voyage out to

India, and the husband, an impecunious German baron, who was trying to win a living as a portrait painter, thought it more advantageous to encourage than to resent the affair. He agreed to be complaisant, even to supply a divorce on certain terms. Hastings, for his part, promised to take the baron's children as well as their mother.

Meanwhile the Imhoffs lived together just as if domestic bliss had not been displaced by a triangle. Wherever Hastings went there the entire Imhoff household went too. For years it was so, until at last the joyous news of the divorce came and the attractive Russian lady known as the Baroness Imhoff became Mrs. Hastings amid a round of festivities at Government House.

A very different form of distraction was provided by the bitter enmity of Philip Francis, generally believed now to have been the author of the *Letters of Junius*. Francis was a Member of Council. He and his friends on the Board formed a majority that blocked Hastings at every turn and did all in their power to humiliate him. They lent their ear and authority to false accusations against the Governor-General. It was inevitable that such strong animosity should seek a settlement in the approved fashion of the day. The two men agreed to fight a duel. They met in a field to the south of Calcutta. Happily Hastings proved the better shot. Francis was shot through the body. But the wound, though severe, did not prove fatal. Francis recovered and returned to England.

The acute financial distress of the Government involved Warren Hastings in two acts over which history will quarrel until the end of time. The first was his demand from Rajah Chait Singh of Benares, who was not an independent prince but a large landholder under British rule, for a special war contribution of £50,000 as well as for 1000 horsemen. Custom sanctioned such a demand.

The Rajah's delay in complying lent colour to the rumour that he was contemplating revolt. Unwilling, with two serious wars in hand, to leave any loopholes of risk, Warren Hastings acted swiftly. He descended on Benares and ordered the Rajah's arrest. The Rajah submitted, but the people of the town rose in revolt. Three English officers were murdered and two companies of Indian troops in English pay were butchered. Warren Hastings himself had to fly for refuge to the fortress of Chunar, ten miles away. Considerable fighting followed. The Rajah was defeated, deposed and a relative set up in his place.

The other incident concerns the Begums of Oudh, mother and grandmother of the Nawab of Oudh, from whom a considerable sum of money was due to the English. The Nawab pleaded that his mother and grandmother had inherited all his father's wealth. He himself was unwilling to take any steps to recover it. Hastings promptly issued orders that the English should do so. The Begums' palace was occupied by troops. The ladies, though not personally interfered with, were undeniably inconvenienced. Two confidential eunuchs, it was learnt, had charge of the treasure and every means was adopted to make them surrender it. Hastings, in Calcutta at the time, was not aware of the actual measures taken. But he knew that pressure was being applied. The eunuchs were placed on short commons and in irons. They suffered no personal injury; they lived indeed to a ripe age, lapped in luxury and surrounded by wealth. Nor were the Begums resentful. They were among the first to send an unsolicited testimonial to Warren Hastings when they heard that he was in trouble with his Government.

Judged by the modern standard of morality, Hastings' action must necessarily be deplored; but both Clive and Warren Hastings understood the Oriental mind too well to bring English methods to the solution of their problems.

No Indian will ever pay out money until every form of coercion has been applied. Cunning in evasion, cunning in any form is appreciated and applauded. Only a man of guile, they feel, has the right to triumph.

Warren Hastings was exceedingly popular with the natives. Whatever his embarrassments he took money only from those who had it ; the poor were never oppressed. He gave the peoples better government than they had ever known. They enjoyed peace. Their lives and property were secure. He was just, honest and scrupulously fair. For the first time in a thousand years, in fact since the coming of the Moslems to India, the population found to their surprise that the balance was held evenly between the two races, toleration for each and protection for both. Any wonder his memory is still revered in that country !

Yet, when after thirteen years of rule in India he returned home, he was made to suffer the indignity and agony of an impeachment that was dragged out painfully over seven weary years : only to be acquitted at last on all counts by an overwhelming majority of his judges. He made mistakes, of course. Who has not ? But if every administrator, past or present, were to have every act of a long lifetime brought under the cruel scrutiny of malice, how few would come out of the ordeal unscathed ?

4

It is consistent with Britain's censure of her able ministers that the inefficient should be rewarded. Lord Cornwallis had been responsible for the greatest reverse suffered by British arms in the war of American Independence. Caught with his army at Yorktown he surrendered with the entire force, thus virtually bringing the war to an end. As a reward for losing America he was afforded the opportunity of losing India. Strict injunctions were given him to preserve peace at any

price. The directors of the East India Company had had enough of fighting. They did not want any more of the revenue frittered away on senseless wars.

But they reckoned without Tipoo Sultan and the unruly Mahrattas. Cornwallis, despite every effort to maintain peace, found himself drawn into war. He handled the difficult situation with far more skill than he had applied to the American war. He persuaded the Mahrattas to assist him against Tipoo, promising them a part of the spoil, a proposal which they accepted with alacrity. The alliance proved most advantageous. Tipoo was defeated and surrendered wide tracts of territory, both to the Mahrattas and the English.

The one serious criticism that can be levelled against Cornwallis is upon the terms of his settlement with Tipoo. It was obvious to all that Tipoo was not only a tyrant but insane. He suffered from strange whims that led to appalling excesses. He was a megalomaniac. His subjects were inflicted with a new calendar and a fantastic coinage. His treatment of his British prisoners made his name a byword for barbarity in every English home. He was regarded as a monster and trotted out by mothers to scare naughty children. Cornwallis should have avoided making any terms with this mad adventurer, who had no title whatsoever in any of the land he ruled. Nothing short of his complete overthrow could have restrained Tipoo from working further havoc on his unfortunate subjects or from continuing to plot and conspire against the English. Cornwallis's haste in securing peace served merely to store up trouble for his successors. The urgency for sterner action should have been apparent from the great incursion of Tipoo's subjects into those districts ceded to the English. But Cornwallis neglected the opportunity.

He was more interested in reforms than in war. It was his ambition to ease the burden of taxation that lay so

heavily upon the shoulders of the peasants. But his well-meaning endeavours only won him the resentment of the Indians. His reduction of the land tax, the principal source of revenue in a country so largely agricultural, was certainly welcomed ; since all previous rulers, even the considerate Akbar, had insisted on taking a third and sometimes a half of the gross produce. But when Cornwallis replaced the time-honoured Eastern methods of dealing with defaulters by imprisonment, flogging, torture or execution and imposed in their stead the more humane English mode of attachment and sale, the anger of the populace knew no bounds. No Indian cares how much corporal indignity and suffering he endures so long as his land is left for his family, as it was under the old method even after execution. The new benefits were to them nothing short of a disaster. Indeed it proved so in a very few years. A large number of landholders were reduced to absolute beggary by these forced sales. Greedy speculators stepped in, bought the land only for speculative gain and ignored entirely the position and the plight of the peasant. Later British administrators had to adjust the unhappy outcome of this well-intentioned reform.

In another direction Cornwallis was far more successful. He saw around him Indians in positions of responsibility and control. Most of them were corrupt. They were greedy, contemptuous of their own people, eager only to line their own pockets. He had them all turned out. He handed over their offices to Europeans, who, he insisted, should be paid liberally and forbidden to take any part at all in the trading activities of the Company, on which indeed the earlier members of the Civil Service had had solely to rely.

5

No man could have come to India better equipped for the Governor-Generalship than—to give him his ultimate

title—the Marquis of Wellesley, elder brother of Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington. Lord Wellesley had not only exceptional ability, confidence in his own judgment, culture and eloquence, but as a member for several years of the Indian Board of Control he had acquired a very thorough understanding of India's problems. It was at the urging of his younger brother, already a soldier in India, that he decided to accept the responsibility of ruling the country.

His desire to bring the whole of India under the British flag was actuated doubtless by imperialism. But with the shrivelled Mogul arm raised above the country in impotence, with chaos triumphant, with unruly hordes plundering and butchering everywhere, with adventurers snatching at thrones and the helpless, driven millions receiving neither justice nor mercy, Wellesley felt that, imperialism apart, he owed it as a duty to these people to take them under his protective wing. "People do not assert," it was said in India, "that they have a right to the protection of the British Government. They say that the British Government now occupies the place of the great protecting power, and is the natural guardian of the peaceable and weak; but owing to its refusal to use its influence for their protection, the peaceful and weak States are continually exposed to oppressions and cruelties of robbers and plunderers, the most licentious and abandoned of mankind."

For six years, the rigours of economy, the insistence of the shareholders of the East India Company on dividends had left these simple millions to their awful fate. The situation had become infinitely worse during that time of so-called peace. The upstart kings and the unprincipled marauding hordes, regarding British indifference as timidity, formed secret alliances for the expulsion of the English. Britain was engaged at this time in the fierce and bitter wars of the French Revolution. No opportunity

was lost by Napoleon for establishing a link with the worst elements in India. He promised to assist them. Indeed he set out himself for India to lead them in person. News was brought to Wellesley of Napoleon's arrival in Egypt. It was but a short stage thence to India. If all Europe could not arrest the Corsican's progress, was it possible for Asia to resist him? Wellesley's predicament was unenviable. Petted by Napoleon, Tipoo Sultan, that madman of Southern India, broke out into fresh revolt, but by a masterly stroke of diplomacy, Wellesley succeeded in isolating him from all allies. Arthur Wellesley (Wellington) then set out against Tipoo, shot him through the head in battle, and captured his capital Seringapatam. All the territory his father had ruthlessly seized was confiscated and restored for the most part to the dispossessed Hindu family. Wellington was careful not to allow his troops to imitate the marauding tactics of the enemy. All excesses were sternly suppressed, as he laconically records in his despatch: "By the greatest exertion, by hanging, flogging, etc. etc., in the course of that day, I restored order among the troops, and I hope I have gained the confidence of the people."

The Mahrattas had still to be dealt with. Wellesley tried to convert them into peaceful neighbours, but even those of the Mahrattas who had grouped themselves into States were incapable of settling down to an orderly life. For their revenues they depended not on taxation but on plunder. They plundered their subjects and the subjects of every State within reach. In the Mahratta State of Gwalior, the Scindia's chief minister, who was also his father-in-law, took a fiendish delight in devising new modes of execution. The Peshwa, chief of all Mahratta princes, used to provide himself with the joyous diversion of sitting in a balcony and watching his subjects being tortured.

To win such people over by alliances was impossible.

Yet it was attempted. They were not, however, disposed either to abandon their mode of life or to listen to the pious counsels of the English. So war became inevitable. It proved a most stubborn campaign. All the Mahratta chiefs began fighting at the same time. The British found themselves engaged in battles all over India. Wellington took charge of the operations in the south. There were at first many reverses ; but just as the English were getting the situation well in hand, the directors, disturbed by the costs and angry that despite their orders wars should still be going on, recalled Wellesley. The Mahratta wars were brought to a hurried conclusion. It meant merely the postponement of the issue, for an issue had to be reached.

An attempt was made to impeach Wellesley on his return home, but nothing came of it fortunately. The directors of the trading company, with an eye only on balance-sheets, were distressed, but the masses in India were already witnessing the dawn of unprecedented happiness and prosperity.

An era of strict non-interference followed. Insults were calmly pocketed by the English ; allies were heartlessly abandoned. All that happened beyond the frontiers was ignored. Encouraged by this indifference, a few of the bolder spirits made raids across the borders, but even to these the English shut their eyes. It was peace with a vengeance. The war with Napoleon was still on. French machinations continued in India. But orders from home forbade interference with their endless scheming. The more peaceful the attitude of the English, the more audacious the others became. And the general chaos was a constant danger. A neutral policy could not be maintained. It was becoming apparent now even to the directors.

At about this time the East India Company died a natural death. For years its profits had been nil or

negligible. Now, with the ports of Europe closed by Napoleon, a clamour arose for India to be thrown open to general trade. The East India Company was promptly deprived of its monopoly. It served no further purpose, but was allowed to linger on as a sort of channel between Whitehall and India. Even this vestige of power was torn from it a few years later.

6

To clear up the mess of Wellesley's pacific successors, a self-indulgent, extravagant man-about-town who happened to be a close friend of the dissolute Prince Regent was appointed. Nobody could understand why. The new Governor-General, known to us as the Marquis of Hastings, had done nothing either to qualify for this honour or to win recognition : the royal friendship itself was by no means to his advantage. He had spent eight years in America fighting against the insurgent subjects of King George the Third in their war of independence. Later he saw service in France against Napoleon. Now, at the age of almost sixty, he was sent to India ; and all who had any knowledge of conditions in that country were agreed that it was the worst possible appointment that could have been made. Indeed they were prepared to state quite openly that he would prove the greatest failure in India. That seemed obvious ; it needed no prophecy.

But an extraordinary change came over this man from the moment he assumed his responsibilities. He applied himself so diligently and conscientiously to the task that he was at his desk at as early an hour as four every morning. He never took a holiday, working year in year out in the steaming plains for nine and a half weary years without ever escaping to the cool, refreshing hills. Belying the prophets he proved one of the ablest, indeed one of the greatest, of India's rulers.

He inherited a disconcerting legacy from those peace-at-any-price years. The anarchy had intensified. Two new and equally vicious forces of disruption as the Mahrattas had sprung into being. They were the Pathans, composed entirely of Mohammedan freebooters and numbering many thousands; and, even more fierce, the Pindaris, a conglomeration of many sects and peoples, whose sole link was banditry. The Pindaris numbered at least 30,000. Many of them were soldiers who had served various adventurers and were now out for themselves. They were supported by fugitives from justice, idlers, wasters and profligates. It was their practice to drink copiously of *pinda*,¹ then leap on to their horses and set out on their fell enterprises in vast gangs of 3000. They were heavily armed, with pikes, swords and bars of iron. They carried neither tents nor baggage, but made straight for their objective, travelling with great speed and devastating the country for miles. All they could carry they seized and bore away. What they could not take they destroyed. No man or woman was safe. In order to force people to reveal hidden hoards of wealth the Pindaris applied the most awful tortures. A bag filled with hot ashes was held against the victim's mouth and nose and a severe blow was administered on the back to make the unfortunate man inhale. In a few minutes the lungs were burned right out. Many who perished in this agony had no wealth at all to reveal, but others, pitifully gasping out the information, died equally miserably. Boiling oil was poured over some. Straw was tied to the hands and feet of others and set on fire. Children were tossed up into the air and caught on sabres as they fell. Women were ravished in the very presence of their husbands. There were women in the Pindari ranks, wild-eyed masculine women, far more savage and ruthless than the men.

¹ A fermented drink.

For some years they refrained from trespassing over the British border, but the desolation they had wrought forced them to venture further afield, and they were emboldened by Britain's solicitude for peace to torture and kill even British subjects. In 1812 they plundered and destroyed a number of British villages. The entire province of Bihar was seized with terror; but the British did nothing. The Pindaris soon came again, and still again, carrying off glittering loads of booty. By 1816 things got so bad that the Pindaris, in one fell raid into British territory, plundered over 300 villages and tortured to death nearly 4000 men and women. Lord Hastings, who had not been long in India, thought it was high time something was done, whatever the directors chose to say about it afterwards. The Pindaris would have to be exterminated. Drastic measures were necessary; but not only were the native States not disposed to co-operate with the British, but there was an extraordinary link between the Pindaris, the Pathans and the Mahrattas. No doubt they felt that as men of the same calling they ought to stand shoulder to shoulder against such a menace as the British offered. They realised that the British would be far more embarrassed if concerted action was taken by the marauders. So they acted together and at once. The British found themselves engaged once more in numerous campaigns all over the country, to the distress, of course, of the directors. But Lord Hastings was resolved that this time a thorough clean-up should be effected; that a permanent, not a temporary, settlement should be attained. The war raged for two years. Britain emerged from it the paramount power in India. The effect of this on the remaining native States was most salutary. They ceased warring with each other and looked to Britain in future as arbiter of their quarrels. At this point a new chapter in the history of India began. The old anarchy and chaos were at last

disappearing. A strong hand had again got grip of the situation.

There were two other wars at about this time, though we need not concern ourselves with them. One was against Nepal, which lies along the southern slopes of the lofty Himalayas. It was the inevitable outcome of the succession of frontier raids by the Nepalese ; but it is eloquent of Britain's attitude that, although victorious, she neither deposed the Rajah nor annexed any part of the country. The government was an unusually orderly one ; so it was left undisturbed. A treaty of friendship was drawn up ; it has lasted to this day.

The other was a war with Burma, brought about by the vainglorious desire of the Burmese King to rid India of the English. So sure was he of success that he sent an expedition with a pair of golden handcuffs for the wrists of the Governor-General. All earlier overtures of friendship from the English had been scorned. The British envoys had been insulted, their sepoy killed. So war became inevitable. The Burmese promptly established an alliance with the Mahrattas. But the war resulted in a severe trouncing of the Burmese, the confiscation of a large slice of the country and the extraction of a substantial indemnity.

The Burmese version of the campaign is amusing : " In the years 1186 and 1187 (of the Burmese era) "—states their official account—" the Kula pyu, or white strangers of the West, fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took that place and Prome, and were permitted to advance as far as Yandaboo ; for the King, from motives of piety and regard to life, made no preparation whatever to oppose them. The strangers had spent vast sums of money in their enterprise, so that by the time they reached Yandaboo their resources were exhausted, and they were in great distress. They then petitioned the King, who in

his clemency and generosity, sent them large sums of money to pay their expenses back, and ordered them out of the country."

Sixty years later, following further acts of aggression against England, it became necessary to annex the rest of Burma.

7

The next notable figure in the British Indian gallery is Lord William Cavendish-Bentinck, a round, smooth-faced man of middle age, who had been recalled for misgoverning Madras, but had the temerity to apply for the Governor-Generalship almost immediately. His application was ignored ; but, such are the changes of political favour, a few years later the coveted post was offered him voluntarily. He returned to India with the confidence of few ; yet, oddly, he did exceptionally well. His victories were entirely those of peace, largely because Britain was at last the paramount power in India.

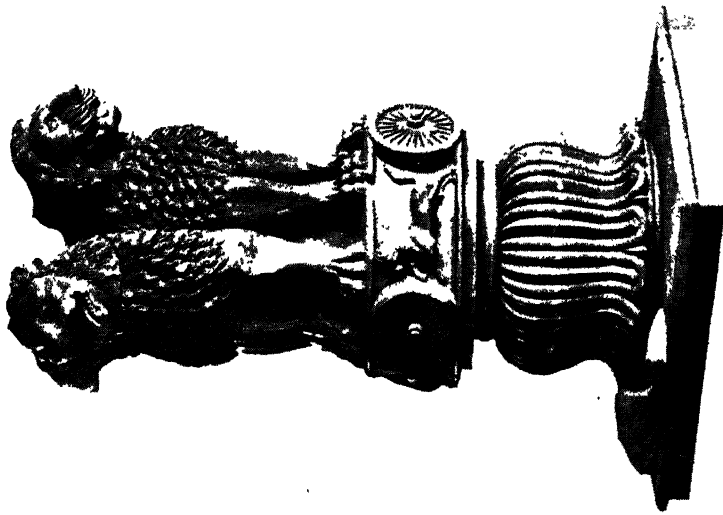
First he abolished Suttee. This cruel Hindu rite, regarded by all as a divine injunction, had led millions of widows, willingly or protestingly, to the funeral pyres of their husbands, where as a mark of their devotion they sacrificed their own lives. On the death of a king almost his entire harem perished in this manner. It is recorded that in 1799 in British territory twenty-two women were burnt alive with the body of a Brahmin, who had more than a hundred wives. " At the first kindling of the fire only three of these wives had arrived. The fire was kept kindled three days ! On the first day three were burnt, on the second and third days nineteen more. Some of these women were as much as forty years old, and others as young as sixteen. The first three had lived with the Brahmin, the others had seldom seen him. He married in one house four sisters ; two of these were burnt."¹

¹ *India's Cries to British Humanity*, by J. Peggs.

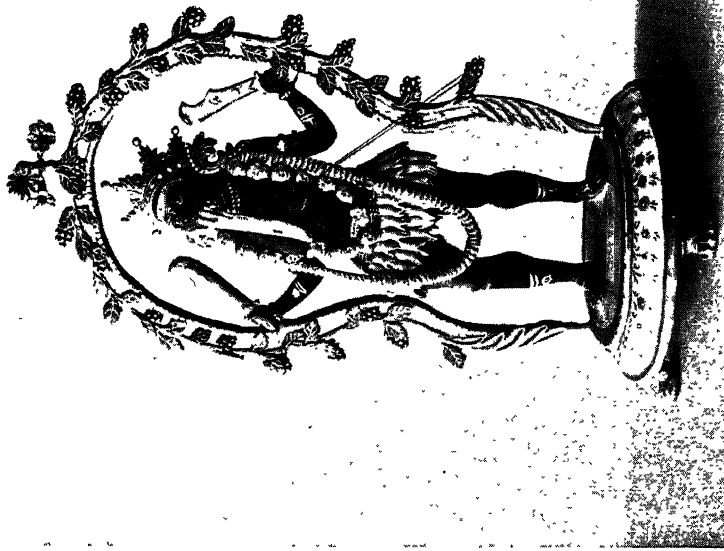
In many instances women dragged to the funeral pyre had to be drugged before they could be persuaded to mount it. Some were strapped to the corpse of their husband. They struggled frantically, implored the priests to release them, prayed and wept and screamed, while the crackling flames licked out viciously and consumed them. To drown their cries a wild music was provided by a hired rabble.

The British looked upon such rites with horror, but were diffident about interfering with religious practices. Discreet suggestions were made to the priests that in all instances magistrates should be informed in advance of suttees, so that the police might supervise the rites, permitting the sacrifice only of those who voluntarily offered themselves. It was also suggested that widows under sixteen years of age and pregnant women should be spared such a death. That sterner action was not taken was due to the fear that Indian troops, on whom the strength and security of the British depended, might resent this interference with their religion. But Bentinck, let it be said to his undying credit, took his courage in both hands in 1829 and forbade the practice throughout British India. Suttee was declared illegal and made punishable as manslaughter. Those who used violence, compulsion or administered drugs were themselves punishable with death. There were many protests, but no risings. In the course of a few years suttee was completely suppressed, though to this day there are occasional instances of a secret suttee by a pious wife—a solitary suicide, unattended by any priest.

Bentinck next turned his attention to the Thugs. This religious order, whose principal rite was the strangulation of some helpless traveller, had existed in India from time immemorial. The thugs were scattered all over the country. Membership was hereditary—no one entitled to exercise the privilege could evade the dictates of the awful



CAPITAL OF ASOKA'S PILLAR AT SARNATH
(*Indian Archaeological Survey*)



THE GODDESS KALI
(*Victoria and Albert Museum*)

goddess Kali. After the conquest of India by Mohammedans, many low-class Moslems joined this murderous sect and bowed their unashamed heads before the Hindu idol—in return for the loot she magnanimously allowed her devotees to take from their victims. From time to time efforts had been made to break up this criminal order, but it was never possible to identify, let alone convict, the thugs. They were known only to each other and sworn to the greatest secrecy. Engaged in everyday avocations as farmers, domestic servants, merchants, landlords, priests and even kings, they would, in answer to the call (communicated by a secret code of signs), suddenly leave everything and make for the forests. Here they would assemble at an appointed place and wait for a caravan of merchants or pilgrims. They always took care that they outnumbered the caravan. Travelling the same road, they laughed and jested with those they intended to destroy. When miles away from human habitation, their foul work began. Each thug had his appointed task: some kept watch, others dug graves, while the stranglers whipped off their turbans and, using them as lassoes, caught their victims around the throat, tightening slowly until the tongues rolled out and the eyes swung over to a dying gurgle. The hands and feet of the victim were then tied. Before burial, a solemn ritual had to be gone through in accordance with the dictates of their bloodthirsty goddess.

For years the British were completely baffled by these thug activities. Sepoys used to disappear mysteriously; they were never heard of again. The keenest vigilance failed to detect anything of the slightest consequence concerning the thugs. No evidence could be obtained, for the only eye-witnesses were themselves thugs. Even when, after each murder, as their piety demanded, they made offerings in their temples of silver and molasses, the priests kept their peace, for they too were thugs. There

were thugs in the highest places in British India. One, a man of keen intelligence and polished manners, was asked years afterwards whether he had ever felt any compunction in murdering innocent people.

"Does any man feel compunction," he said, "in following his trade, and are not all our trades assigned us by Providence?"

"How many people have you killed with your own hands in the course of your life?"

"I have killed none."

"Have you not just been describing to me a number of murders?"

"Yes, but do you suppose I have committed them? Is any man killed from a man's killing? Is it not the hand of God that kills him, and are we not instruments in the hand of God?"

It was discovered that servants working in European households, fulfilling their duties with care and efficiency, used to devote their annual vacations to thugism. One of these, with the children of an Englishman in his care, was remarkably tender and kind to his little charges. Yet, year after year, he would leave them to indulge in his appointed orgy of strangulation.

For eight years the British authorities grappled with this menace, and in the end the thugs were stamped out in 1837. One of them, Feringhia, finding the British too strong, saved himself by betraying his colleagues. He divulged all the secrets of their sacred order and the police were able to round them up by the hundred. During the trials one thug unashamedly confessed to having strangled 719 persons.

Bentinck would be remembered for these two reforms alone. But he did more. Urged by Lord Macaulay, he decreed that education in India should be in the English language chiefly. This had its drawbacks, but its value to the Indians was inestimable, for it was to enable the

divided millions, speaking two hundred unintelligible tongues, to converse with each other in a language that was at last understood by all. Bentinck also readmitted Indians to the higher posts of governance, thus removing the bar that Cornwallis had in an emergency imposed.

It was not his ambition to extend frontiers, but one annexation was forced upon him by the indescribable tyranny of the Rajah of Coorg, a small State near the edge of Southern India. The ruler, a bloodthirsty fiend named Vira Rajah, whose country had been rescued from Hyder Ali and Tipoo, requited Britain's kindness with nothing but animosity and open enmity. So unbalanced indeed was he that he put to death every male member of his family in order to safeguard his throne. A little later, afraid that he might be displaced by a female, he had a still further family slaughter. Aunts, daughters and sisters were strangled with his own hands. Every effort of Bentinck's to make the Chief mend his ways failed; nothing remained but to annex his State for the good of the people he so brutally misgoverned. In a pit in the jungle the English found the remains of most of the royal family.

The exiled Rajah was treated with far more consideration than he deserved. He lived in luxury in Benares with his favourite daughter and, after some years, left for England. There they became Christians, Queen Victoria acting as godmother to the girl, who took the name of Victoria.

This cruel Rajah died in 1863 and was buried at Kensal Green cemetery. The daughter married an Englishman, a colonel in the British Army. But the marriage proved unhappy.

Not long after her death some visitors called in a cab at the Oriental Club in Hanover Square and drove off with the Colonel, who was never seen again. The only child of the marriage also disappeared soon afterwards.

The English have not an entirely clean sheet. We have already noticed the rapacity of the officials who followed Clive. Their misrule was happily short-lived ; they were soon driven from the country. We are now to see an act of highhandedness that is not the less deplorable because it was inspired by the Prime Minister in England. Palmerston, living in constant dread of the Russian bogey, trembled when told of a Russian advance on Herat ; and without waiting even to consult a map, commanded the Governor-General of India to establish an alliance with Afghanistan. There were hundreds of miles of neutral territory between the Afghans and the English : the whole of the Punjab, Bahawalpur, Sind and the Rajputana Desert. But fear of Russia so distorted their perspective that before anyone knew what was happening the Amir was driven from his country and the British had set up a new King on the Afghan throne. It was the obvious sequel to the refractory attitude of the existing Amir, but the move was condemned by the Duke of Wellington and by every other person able to view the situation sanely. Advice and criticism were both brushed aside brusquely. The British Army was placed in occupation of Kabul. A British official ruled Afghanistan in the name of the nominee Amir. Everything seemed calm. Englishmen brought their wives and families and settled there. But the presence and the behaviour of the English were strongly resented. The conduct of the soldiers was licentious. The officers themselves did nothing but quarrel with each other. In such confusion of discipline it is not surprising that the Afghans seized the opportunity to revolt. The political officer, Sir William Macnaghten, was trapped and murdered. His body was seized by a howling mob and paraded in triumph through the streets.

It soon became obvious that the English could not hold the position. A speedy exodus began. A band of nearly

17,000 men, women and children hurried out of Kabul with the Afghans in pursuit, thirsting for their blood. The snow was falling heavily. Over the soft, white roads sped the breathless horde straining to reach India. In the terrible pass of Khurd Kabul, which runs for five miles between high mountains, they were attacked and perished in thousands. Those who escaped the Afghan knives, died of the bitter cold. Of that vast multitude but one survived, a Dr. Brydon, who—it is recorded by Sir Henry Durand, himself a subaltern in the Afghan campaign—on January 13th, 1842, “sorely wounded and barely able from exhaustion to sit upon the emaciated beast that bore him, reached Jellalabad, and told that Elphinstone’s army, guns, standards, honour, all being lost, was itself completely annihilated. Such was the consummation of a line of policy which from first to last held truth in derision, trod right under foot, and acting on a remote scene, was enabled for a time unscrupulously to mislead the public mind.”

But let us turn from this blot on England’s association with India to still another of those many boons that the British connection has conferred upon the peoples. The history of the last hundred and fifty years is strewn with them.

Slavery in its various forms had existed in India from time immemorial. In the earliest days the number of slaves was considerable. This practice was sanctioned and upheld by law. The Mohammedan incursions added considerably to the total. At every famine people sold themselves by the million in order to purchase food for their children. The British not only countenanced the practice, but in the case of revenue defaulters counted all slaves with the rest of the property and disposed of them in the same way. The most odious feature of the slave trade was the kidnapping of little children, who were smuggled away and sold in the bazaars. The magistrate of Dacca records in 1816: “The unfortunate persons who are sold for slavery are generally little children

(females), or grown-up girls that are enticed away from their parents or other relations and unconscious of their fate. Persons already in a state of slavery are seldom, as far as I can discover, inveigled away with a view to being sold ; but female slaves are often enticed away for other purposes, sometimes by men, and sometimes by women keeping houses of ill-fame. Both descriptions of offence are, I believe, very prevalent, especially the former, though few of them comparatively come officially to the knowledge of the magistrate."

In 1843 slavery was abolished by the Governor-General. There was no question of compensation for owners. Slavery was merely declared illegal and all who continued to own slaves became liable to prosecution.

9

And now we come to Dalhousie, the youngest Governor-General India has ever known, and in some ways the most important. He was only thirty-five when he arrived in Calcutta ; but his administrative ability, his uprightness, his industry, and his strength of character had already won him a place in the ministry in England as President of the Board of Trade.

He landed in India an invalid, almost a cripple ; and ruled the country for eight years, largely from a sick-bed. History is concerned chiefly with the vast accretion of territory to the British during his administration. He was drawn into a war with the Sikhs which led to the conquest of the Punjab. There were also many annexations of States left without a rightful heir. This course was taken to spare them the agony of warring claimants with their hordes of hired assassins, each armed with poison and dagger. Dalhousie applied an equal vigour to the internal administration of British India. The effects were far-reaching. His reforms indeed were so revolutionary that the simple-minded millions saw merely the old order crumble and a

new, strange, terrifying world spring into being. There were railway trains, drawn by no mode of traction that their minds could grasp. There were humming telegraph wires overhead that bore a whisper hundreds of miles away. Thousands of acres of arid desert land were made to bloom and yield harvests. Canals were laid for transport and irrigation—new rivers to serve the same functions as their sacred streams. The benefits conferred upon the people were immense. All India had at last been united under one rule. There was peace in the whole country. Even the humblest life was secure from molestation. No enemy could sweep in through the frontier passes. Merchants were able to trade, peasants to till their fields, free from the depredations of thugs and bandits. The last lingering horror of Hinduism—human sacrifice—had also been suppressed. This was believed in certain districts to improve the fertility of the soil. The intended victims were fattened, so that there would be abundant flesh for the ritual; then to the effigy of an elephant set upon a pole the shrieking victim was tied and whirled around. After a prayer, at a signal from the priest the congregation rushed forward brandishing sharp knives and, with shouts of joy, sliced the flesh off the whirling victim. For so long as life remained they continued to apply their knives. Then they cut down the mutilated remains, burnt the skeleton, but the flesh secured was reverently used to fertilise the soil.

It took seven years to stamp out this barbarous practice.

The Indians did not whole-heartedly welcome such interference with their rites. There had been too drastic a destruction of what had been sanctified by practice—suttee, thuggee, slavery, and now this; the pace of change had been too swift. There was an air of unsettlement in the country, an atmosphere in which the merest rumour might lead to disastrous consequences.

In such a state Dalhousie left the country in 1856. Within a few months came the Mutiny.

CHAPTER IV

REBELLION

I

IT was barely a hundred years since the British had begun to carve out an empire for themselves in India ; and among a people with whom prophecy is a favourite diversion, the ominous rounding of a century led to the belief that with it would coincide the end of the East India Company.

The wish was by no means in this case the father to the thought. At any rate, not as far as the populace was concerned. There had been frequent and abundant expressions of gratitude, unsullied by any widespread rising. Here and there, if one were attentive, there could be heard the low yet sullen rumble of disaffection. For there were disaffected elements among these diversified peoples. There were the bandits, for instance, and the lawless jungle folk whose sole livelihood had been plunder, the wastrels and vagabonds of the cities, the Mahratta hordes, and all those others whose predatory careers had been checked by British vigilance. They vied in their hostility to Britain with rajahs, whose cruelty and delight in torture had led to their dispossession ; with swarms of unscrupulous ministers driven out of office ; and above all with adventurers, stripped of their ill-gotten lands. These nursed a bitter resentment against the British. If they could but combine, they intended to drive the new rulers from the country.

The only safeguard of the British was the loyalty of the native army, which vastly outnumbered the scant white forces. There were, in fact, a quarter of a million sepoys to 45,000 white soldiers. In an emergency the peoples themselves, the peasants, the shopkeepers, and the timid townsmen, though they owed peace, security, and life itself to Britain, could scarcely be relied on to face the murderous revolutionary hordes from a mere sense of

gratitude. Nor could they be expected to achieve anything if they did.

It is surprising in the circumstances that a greater solicitude was not displayed for the sepoy's well-being. Instead, unbelievable follies were committed, until in their exasperation the sepoys were disposed to lend a sympathetic ear to the malicious whispers of the disaffected. The first hundred years of British rule are stained with sepoy mutinies. The first took place only seven years after Plassey. The native troops felt that they were inadequately paid. Various allowance that they had enjoyed had suddenly been stopped. The rising was vigorously suppressed, not by granting their demands, but by having the twenty-five ringleaders blown from guns.

The next serious rising occurred in 1806. It was provoked by an incredible piece of stupidity. The Government of Madras, with a sudden and misguided zeal for smartening up its army, abolished the turban, and substituted leather cockades. This would have been offensive enough in itself for its implied contempt of the national headgear; but the choice of leather was even more unfortunate. From the hides of hogs and cows these cockades were fashioned; the one abominable to the Mohammedan, the other venerated by the Hindu. As if this were not enough, orders were issued forbidding the use of all caste marks on the forehead. The cherished earrings of the soldiers were also removed. People began to believe it was but the first step to a wholesale conversion of the sepoys to Christianity. The Madras army finally mutinied. In the fortress of Vellore, the sepoys attacked the English at dead of night, murdering some in their beds, shooting others in the streets. There were similar risings in other parts of the Madras Province until the offensive regulations were withdrawn.

Less than twenty years later a fresh mutiny occurred just outside Calcutta. The sepoys, always unwilling to

serve at any distance from home, were horrified on being ordered to Burma, since a sea journey is regarded even to-day as involving loss of caste. The 47th Native Infantry and some other troops mutinied. A battery of European artillery opened fire on them, killing many. The ring-leaders who survived were hanged.

Again and again came the same warning of deep-seated disaffection among the very men on whom the British were almost wholly reliant for their security. In 1844, a mere thirteen years before the Great Mutiny, there was a succession of mutinies up and down the country. Others occurred in 1849 and in 1852. Englishmen, who deserved to be heard, raised their voices in grave warning. But nothing was done. When Dalhousie left India in 1856, he proudly proclaimed that all was well in the country. To his successor he gave the assurance that before him stretched years of peace.

2

Within a few weeks *chappatis*, the flat cakes that serve as bread in India, were being passed mysteriously from village to village. A messenger would arrive. Each man into whose hands a *chappati* was delivered was told he must make six others and send them on to the next village. Like chain letters, they criss-crossed their way about India. Meanwhile sepoy passed lotus flowers from regiment to regiment. In every cantonment appeared a mysterious stranger with a lotus flower. It was delivered with secrecy to the chief native officer of the regiment. Along the ranks from man to man it was passed; each looked at it and passed it on. When it reached the last man, he crept away to pass it on to the next military station.

The cryptic message of lotus and *chappati* has not to this day been deciphered. One thing these tokens made abundantly clear: grave disaffection was being spread about the country. Among the populace were the unruly

and the dispossessed. The sepoys, sensitive, jealous of caste, clamorous for better pay, found themselves, at this crisis, confronted by fresh economies. They also saw an exasperated Government engaged in recruiting a fresh army from the lower castes, men who would be prepared to go wherever they were sent. Soon, they felt, they would lose their livelihood. Or, alternatively, lose their caste. Everywhere they saw Christian missionaries busily making converts to the accompaniment of hearty huzzas from the Governor-General and his devout wife.

It was now that the awful discovery was made about the cartridges supplied for the new Enfield rifles. These cartridges, which had to be bitten before loading, were greased, it was said, with the fat of cows and swine. The same fateful animals. To people who regarded ritual as the essence of faith, this revelation was staggering. It was as if, for no fault of their own, they had been excommunicated and robbed of all hope of salvation. Here at last was proof, they felt, that the wild whispers were true—that the Government did indeed intend to convert them forcibly. Had not the Moslem invaders done the same? Why then should these Christians be different?

With a promptitude worthy of the emergency, letters were written by frantic officers, aware of the temper of their men. Withdraw the cartridges, they urged. Issue assurances. But red tape interposed a disastrous delay. The letters went sedately through the tedious channels of routine, passing from this department to that, and lying in each for the approved number of weeks. The murmur of the sepoys meanwhile rose to a roar. In the end they refused to accept the cartridges. This brought them into the category of mutineers.

It was not until the twelfth hour had struck that the authorities began to explain. The sepoys were informed that they could, if they preferred, use their fingers instead of their teeth. But it was too late. First here, then there,

for five months—while the Government was engaged in issuing notes to the commanding officers, who in turn pleaded, with becoming dignity, on parade—there were mutinous outbreaks all over Northern India. Each was suppressed, though not always with adequate vigour; and leniency to the Oriental has always been synonymous with fear. The Government was afraid, they believed. It was powerless, they said. For there were hardly any white soldiers. Regiment after regiment had been withdrawn for service in the Crimea, in Persia, in Burma and in China. It was declared in the bazaars that the Crimea had proved disastrous for the British, that Russia had even conquered England. Surely this was the time to turn and drive the white man from the country! The *chappati* still passed from hand to hand, and from village to village. And the lotus flower . . .

But the British took no precautions. Within easy reach of the sepoy lay vast stores of ammunition, unguarded by even a platoon of white soldiers. After each rising was suppressed it was believed that the entire country had been calmed at last. The English officers resumed their normal round. They dined and danced, flirted and laughed; but the Nana Sahib was in a different mood and travelled sullenly from town to town. It is odd that the English saw nothing untoward in this strange activity of a native princeling, of whose hostility all were perfectly aware. The adopted son of the last of the great Mahratta chiefs, Dhandu Pant, known as the Nana Sahib, had been refused the pension which the British had been paying the dispossessed Peshwa.¹ The Nana claimed this as his right, but apart from his not being the actual heir, the pension would naturally have ceased on the Peshwa's death.

The Nana Sahib argued; he could do no more—except wait.

At Meerut, on Sunday the 10th of May, 1857, while

¹ The fiendish Peshwa. (See Chapter III.)

evening service was being held in the little church, a regiment of Indian cavalry and two regiments of native infantry rushed on the gaol in which only the evening before some of their companions had been confined for insubordination. The prison doors were battered down, all prisoners were released. Soon the entire town was in an uproar. The freed convicts and the town rabble swarmed around the mutinous troops. They armed themselves with swords, clubs, bricks, anything they could find, and marched upon the homes of the English. They burst into the houses. Every man, woman and child in them was murdered. Hurrying out, with loot in their bloodstained hands, the frenzied mob set fire to the houses, and prepared to march on Delhi. They were resolved to treat the Europeans there in the same way. The white soldiers in Meerut, numbering well over two thousand, moved about agitatedly, resolved to punish this havoc and butchery. But before they could act the mutineers were on the road to Delhi, which lay a mere 40 miles away. The Commanding Officer at Meerut, an inert, elderly imbecile, was not in the least disposed to pursue them. His officers urged him, but he would not spare even a man to ride out and warn Delhi of the approaching peril.

3

The next morning's sun rose on the lordly city of Delhi, with its white mosques and its gleaming palaces. In the distance was seen a dancing haze, which proved to be horsemen galloping from Meerut.

The horsemen swept into Delhi, made straight for the gaol, and set all the prisoners free. They then dashed to the Palace to rescue the last of the Moguls from the pampered luxury he was enjoying on a British pension. Him, forgetful of all the wrongs the Moguls had done them, Hindus and Mohammedans alike proclaimed Emperor of India.

By this time the rest of the Meerut rabble had arrived. They rushed through the streets, murdering every white man and woman they could find. As in Meerut, the English houses were invaded and a fearful massacre ensued. Not even the half-castes were spared. They were Christians, that was enough. The church was foully desecrated. In the newly-opened telegraph office, a young signaller, hearing the uproar, dashed to the window and noticed the mutinous rabble roaring and advancing towards him. Quickly he placed his hand on the apparatus, and steadying his fingers began to tap out : " The sepoy's have come in from Meerut, and are burning everything. Mr. Todd is dead, and we hear several Europeans. We must shut up . . ." At this point the mutineers burst in. The signaller was slain.

The troops ? They were situated on a ridge two miles away. When they heard of what was happening in Delhi, they too mutinied. In the town itself, near the palace of the newly-proclaimed Emperor, was a large powder magazine, with vast stores of ammunition guarded by native troops and a few English officers. Lieutenant Willoughby, aware that the mutineers would try to take possession of this, despatched an appeal to the Ridge for assistance ; but none came. The boyish subaltern had to act quickly. There were seven English officers with him. He barricaded the outer gates of the magazine, and assigned to each man his post. They could defend the place for a time : he continued to hope that help would come. If it didn't—well, there was always one way out. A train was laid from the powder store to a tree in the yard. Here he stationed a man named Scully. As he had expected, the mutineers came. The angry mob thundered at the magazine gates. When these did not yield they placed ladders against the walls and came swarming up. The native guards of the powder magazine turned instantly against their English officers. The gallant band of eight

men, who had stood by their guns for three hours, had now to fight alone. Slowly they were being overpowered. Willoughby looked out for the last time. He could see no reinforcements. He turned then to Buckley, who raised his hat to give the agreed signal. Scully, from under the tree, promptly fired the train. The whole place was blown up. More than a thousand rebels were sent hurtling into the air. Thousands more were struck down by flying splinters.

The explosion was seen from the Ridge, where the English officers had been striving bravely to keep their mutinous sepoys in check. The women and children here were placed together in the flagstaff tower, a room smaller than the Black Hole of Calcutta : the children crying, the women hysterical, the heat intense. They were confident help would come from Meerut. But the hours slipped by, and first one, then another of the officers set out for Meerut to beg for succour. But before they could get many yards from the Ridge they were shot down by the mutineers. Doctor Baston, disguised as a native, seemed likely to get through, but he, too, was fired on and stopped.

With the explosion of the powder magazine the end came. The mutinous sepoys, misinterpreting it completely, took it for the triumph of their comrades. They opened fire instantly on the officers. The sun was sinking. There was no hope now of succour. The only way out for the trapped English was by a 30 foot drop into a ditch. With belts and handkerchiefs the officers managed to let the women part of the way down. The men jumped with the children in their arms. Pale and terrified, they made for the jungles, where they wandered for days, naked, weary and starving, under the blistering sun. Many dropped dead ; others had to be tearfully abandoned because they could not keep up. In some of the villages they were ill-treated and beaten. Yet it was through the kindness of a few Hindus that any came through alive.

It was believed now around Meerut and Delhi that British rule had ended. With the disappearance of control the populace fell to fighting among themselves. Old spears and rusty swords were produced and private grievances were settled with their aid. Land tenures that had been decided by the courts were revised now by the sword. There was chaos everywhere. The old criminal bands who had been held in check by the British burst into fresh activity. The defenceless peasants were robbed and killed.

Weeks later the troops at Meerut, compelled by a higher command to move at last, set out for Delhi. With difficulty they managed to occupy the Ridge. But they could not take Delhi. The rebels were too numerous by this time, and their numbers were being hourly augmented by the hordes that poured in from all parts of the country. The English lacked numbers. Their artillery was inadequate. Frantic appeals were being sent out by the Governor-General for more troops. He appealed not only to England, but to the nearer Crown possessions; to South Africa, and Persia, and the Chinese stations. But distances were great, the means of communication slow, and months had to pass before the troops could come.

It was all the British could do to hold the Ridge. They had to keep one eye on their line of communications for supplies and reinforcements; and the other on Delhi, from where the insurgents hurled themselves again and again against the British, determined to dislodge them. The rains set in, the heavy torrential rains of India. The British fought three and four engagements a week, wet to the skin. At all hours of the day and night the rebels surprised them. After each engagement they returned to waterlogged tents. Sickness was rife. Cholera carried off the commanders. The position seemed untenable. Again and again it was argued whether it would not be

wiser for the British to withdraw. But these flabby counsels were sternly rejected by the younger men.

Meanwhile, in Delhi the last of the Moguls basked in the glow of his new-won authority. In his palace he gave daily audiences and received endless petitions. It seemed all very strange to him. The Empire to which the rebels had called him out of his retirement comprised as yet no more than a strip around Delhi. The coffers were empty. The troops were unmanageable. There was neither discipline nor order nor security in the city. The mutinous sepoys, unable to receive money from the King, swaggered through the bazaars and plundered the shopkeepers. The unhappy merchants complained bitterly and begged His Majesty for protection that he was unable to give. Meanwhile His Majesty, in sore need of funds himself, crushed the merchants still further by heavy extortions and forced loans. No home in Delhi was safe. The wives and daughters of the most respected citizens were debauched. Women were outraged in the very streets. The King was powerless. The rabble and the army quarrelled with each other and among themselves. The Mohammedans and the Hindus revived their old feud. The streets of Delhi ran with native blood. The populace began to wonder if conditions had not after all been far better under English rule.

The King himself was most unhappy. Only a few weeks before, living in that same palace on the liberality of the English, he had enjoyed all the pomp and majesty of kingship without its responsibilities. The highest English officials had treated him with deference. They dismounted at the palace entrance and saluted him with the utmost respect ; but now native officers strode insolently into his presence and insulted him to his very face. Once hundreds of angry sepoys rushed up to him and accused the royal princes of embezzling their pay. " If you do not restrain your sons by placing them in prison," they threatened,

"we shall murder you and your entire family." The King, utterly wretched, tried to find comfort in writing verse. "The army surrounds me," he wailed in rhyme, "I have no peace nor quiet; my life alone remains and that they will soon destroy." He begged to be allowed to abdicate. He was tired of it, he said. But they would not let him. He then tried to take refuge in a religious life. "Wearied and helpless," he wrote, "we have now resolved on making a vow to pass the remainder of our days in service acceptable to God, and relinquishing the title of sovereign, fraught with cares and troubles, and in our present griefs and sorrows, assuming the garb of a religious mendicant, to proceed first and stay at the shrine of the saint, Khwaja Sahib, and, after making necessary arrangements for the journey, to go eventually to Mecca." But they would not let him do that either.

Then Nicholson arrived in Delhi. A masterful man, towering in stature. He had a strong, handsome face, black beard and greying hair that tossed about his head in waves. Every man on the Ridge had heard of Nicholson's extraordinary exploits against the mutineers of the Punjab: how he had formed a movable column with which he had swooped this way and that to every point of the compass; how with just a few police *sowars* he had pursued the rebellious 55th all day long, hunting them from village to village, driving them over ridges, cutting down the stragglers and scattering the rest. He had ridden that day over seventy miles, slain a hundred and twenty mutineers, wounded between three and four hundred, taken a hundred and fifty prisoners, and recovered the regimental colours. Only the approach of night had made him draw rein. Such was the man who had come to Delhi.

Upon the hesitant commander on the Ridge, wearied by months of waiting, weakened by sickness, disposed by temperament to remain on the defensive, Nicholson cast a quick and stern eye. The numbers were unquestion-

ably unequal, but with the arrival of the siege train and some reinforcements Nicholson felt the hour had at last come for an advance on Delhi.

It was with the greatest difficulty that the batteries were set up. All the while that the English worked on the emplacements, enemy fire played heavily upon them. But the English worked on. The guns were put into position and soon began to reply. They were heavy guns. Vast gaps were torn in the rebel defences. The attacking columns were then drawn up, Nicholson in command of the first. And so the English moved forward to avenge the blood of their women and children.

A fierce musketry fire met them. Large stones were hurled down on their heads. The ranks shook. Man after man fell. But Nicholson, stern, resolute, in the very forefront, led on ; and in time the advancing columns entered the city.

The mutineers proved stubborn defenders. The slaughter on both sides was ghastly. The English ranks grew miserably thin. Nicholson himself fell, shot mortally through the chest. But he did not die for some days. As he lay tossing on his bed, his one thought was of the battle. How were things faring, he enquired in gasps, for speech had become an agony. He was told of unforeseen difficulties ; he was told that the commanding officer was talking of retreating. With a last nervous effort, Nicholson jerked himself up, his face flushed with anger. " Thank God," he cried, " I have strength yet to shoot him if necessary."

The English fought on. Shoulder to shoulder with them fought the loyal Sikhs, with their long hair dressed on top of their heads in knots, the Gurkhas from Nepal, and the sturdy Pathans from the Afghan frontier. Slowly they penetrated further into the city. Victory came. Delhi was won.

With cries of panic the rebels fled. The terrified King left his belongings, and went with the rest. He fled to the

tomb of his ancestor Humayun, who was Akbar's father ; Humayun, who was once himself a fugitive and would understand. But he was pursued by Hodson, hot-headed, red-bearded Hodson, who had raised a corps of Indian irregulars and moulded them into a regiment. With his wild horsemen Hodson galloped to the tomb of the Moguls, ferreted out the trembling Emperor, and handed him over for trial. Hodson then went back for the royal princes. With him there was but one other Englishman and a hundred Indian irregulars, with their flashing scarlet turbans and scarlet sashes. The princes promised to surrender if Hodson would grant them their lives. But Hodson said, "Most certainly not." For these very youths had urged on the mutineers to murder the English. Hodson was resolved on taking them, alive or dead. When the princes realised this they gave in.

Imagine the procession as it moved from the stricken fields, the devastation of seven abandoned Delhis, along miles of crumbling ruins to the newer city that had but lately been the scene of mutinous havoc.

In a bullock-cart sat the princes, encircled by Hodson's horsemen. Behind came a wild, fanatical mob, shrieking, gesticulating, and threatening to rescue the imperial scions. A little way ahead a fresh throng met them. Hodson had to act quickly. He galloped ahead and, addressing the frenzied Moslems, told them that as the princes had dared to order the butchering of English women and children, their own hour had now come. He then snatched a carbine from one of his horsemen and shot the three princes himself.

4

While Delhi was in the hands of the rebels, Cawnpore burst into mutiny. The four native regiments here were all hostile. Their English officers were a mere handful,

most of them invalids. At their head was a frail old man of seventy-five. The position was all the more grave because of the large European population of women and children.

Aware of the disaffection, expecting at every moment a revolt, General Sir Hugh Wheeler, the infirm commander, began to prepare for the emergency. His obvious course would have been to take possession of the magazine. It was a large, roomy building with bullet-proof walls ; strong, protected on one side by the river, and in every way admirably fitted for defence. But for some reason he rejected this. Instead, he selected the open parade ground, which was near the native lines, of all places ! Here he ran up an inadequate embankment of mud, no more than four or five feet in height ; not high enough " to keep out an active cow." It enclosed two slender barracks, the roof of one of them thatched. Here, with amazing precaution, before the sepoy had made any move at all, he began to assemble the entire European population. There was not far away a large store of Government treasure, and this, with incredible folly, he asked the Nana Sahib to protect. True, the Nana had been looked on as a sort of lord of the manor. He had entertained the English at his palatial home, had given them wine and cigars, played billiards with the men, held dances for the ladies, and had generally been regarded as a fine fellow. But at this crucial hour his earlier disaffection, his mysterious comings and goings, his overtures to the troops, should have been given some thought. Actually, at the very moment that Sir Hugh Wheeler was entrusting to him the entire treasure, the Nana was busily plotting the slaughter of the English.

On the 4th of June the Indian troops mutinied. Instantly the Nana revealed himself as their leader. With better sense than Sir Hugh Wheeler, the rebels made straight for the magazine and took possession of all the ammunition.

The guns were then turned on the pitiful entrenchment

behind which the small English population cowered. There were nearly four hundred women and children here ; an even smaller number of English soldiers and about twenty loyal sepoys. The first sign was a puff of smoke. Then a shot came crashing into the enclosure. The women screamed. Children cried in terror. Another and still another shot came over. The sun was blazing overhead, biting into the skins of men and women accustomed in a tropical summer to the shelter of shuttered doors, a fan stirring the confined air, and iced water tinkling in their glasses. They stood now at their posts, battling against overwhelming odds, but never losing hope. Night and day they fought : there was no respite. The Nana's heavy batteries boomed and, as the English ranks thinned and their ammunition dwindled, the reply became feebler and feebler. Men died at their posts ; women fell, striving to assist them ; and children were shot down. One of the bullets struck a man who was standing beside his wife. It killed him, broke both her arms, and wounded the infant she was carrying. The General's son, young Godfrey Wheeler, lying wounded in the shelter of the barracks, had his head torn off in the presence of his mother and sisters by a shot that came crashing through the wall. A day or so later another shot set alight the thatch. This building had been converted into a hospital. The sick, the dying, the mourning women, the terror-stricken children fled from the burning house, their cries mingling with the ceaseless boom of enemy fire and the angry crackle of the rising flames. The weary, distracted remnant of a garrison knew not whether to rescue their comrades and their women from the conflagration or to remain at their posts and keep the enemy at bay. They remained at their posts. Only those who could help themselves were saved. In a crash of blazing masonry the barracks vanished. With it went all the surgical instruments and medical stores.

But one barrack remained now, and of this too very little was left soon. The enemy shells tore vast holes into the walls until there was no shelter anywhere. Worse still, food began to give out. The daily ration was reduced to a handful of flour and a few split peas per person. Most of the English guns lay disabled ; most of the men dead, ill with sunstroke or fever, or driven insane by the intense strain.

The enemy ranks meanwhile were swelled by vast throngs who poured in from all sides, fresh, well fed, and adequately armed. Through that eternal deafening fire, the despairing garrison strained their ears for the approach of the relief they had again and again implored from Lucknow, less than fifty miles away. But alas ! Lucknow could not help them : she could hardly help herself.

This they learned with dismay but fortitude a fortnight later, when Lucknow contrived to smuggle in an answer to their repeated pleas. Not a man could be spared from Lucknow. There remained no hope at all in Cawnpore of relief. Yet this doomed band of men and women, despite all they had already endured, gave three lusty cheers just to hearten themselves to hold the position to the end. Any wonder that, despite superior forces and abundant ammunition, the rebels could do nothing against such valour and resolve. Again and again they hurled themselves upon the weak English defences ; again and again they were hurled back.

Unable to take the position by storm the enemy resolved to secure it by treachery. On the 25th of June, three weeks after the outbreak, a native woman crept into the English entrenchment with a letter from the Nana Sahib promising all a safe conduct to Allahabad.

Imagine the plight of the garrison. There was no hope at all of succour. This offered the only way out. An honourable capitulation—not a surrender. And there were the women and children to consider.

Many opposed it ; but it was decided in the end to accept the Nana's offer. An armistice was arranged. Soon after dawn two mornings later the garrison straggled out. It was a tired, ragged column. For the women and children there were bullock carts ; for the wounded palanquins. But the men came on foot. Slowly they moved towards the river where unwieldy boats with thatched roofs were drawn up by the bank. All breathed more freely now. They had a glimpse at last of safety. A glimpse and no more ; for hidden along the banks were over a thousand armed men awaiting a signal. Also several squadrons of cavalry.

As the English trooped unsuspecting into the boats, a bugle sounded and the swarm of executioners leapt out of cover. Cannon, grape-shot and musket fire were all brought into play. In a few moments the thatched roofs of the boats burst into flame. The wounded and sick were burned to death. The others leapt overboard and crouched for cover on the further side. But the cavalry rode down on them with flashing swords and slew most of the cowering women and children. Then for no reason at all it was decided that the women and children who still lived should be spared. They would serve as pawns, no doubt, in some future bargain. So they were dragged out of the mud and water and led away : a hundred and twenty-five of them, trembling, weeping and bloodstained. It would have been better had they been left to die there. They would have been spared the horrors that were to follow.

They were lodged in the house of a half-caste clerk, situated across the way from the Nana's own sumptuous palace, in which they could hear him making merry with feasts and revels. From day to day their number was augmented by other women and children taken captive in outlying districts ; the men were never spared.

On the 15th of July, when news was received that an avenging English army was within a day's march, the Nana

ordered the instant massacre of the women and children. But the sepoys he sent, rebels though they were, had not the heart for further butchery. They pointed their muskets at the ceiling before they fired. The Nana, however, would not depart from his grim purpose. He sent five butchers with long knives. The women and children were hacked to death. Next morning, into a nearby well were flung the dead, the dying, and a few children who had contrived somehow to survive.

A few hours later the army of Havelock, after battling through a hundred and twenty-six miles of rebel country, arrived. They found Cawnpore deserted. The rebels had fled. The inhabitants had vanished. The Nana himself could not be found anywhere. They saw the shambles by the well. Only the Highland pipes with their pitiful notes could express the feelings of those weary men as they stood there with bared heads.

Havelock set out in search of the enemy. Engagement after engagement he fought. But his force, oppressed by the intense sun and the torrential, tropical rain, decimated by cholera and enemy fire, worn and weary by prolonged marches and recurrent battles, could go no further.

The relief of Lucknow had to wait.

5

There had been signs of trouble in Lucknow even before the outbreak in Meerut. But Sir Henry Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, took immediate steps to check it. He also embarked on elaborate preparations so that Lucknow should be spared the fate of Meerut and Delhi.

Into the Residency, a large, three-storied building, that stood in its own grounds on a hill, he ordered the women, children and invalids to be brought. Guns, ammunition and supplies of every kind were stored in readiness, and the nearest houses were torn down so that there should

be no cover for a besieging army. A man of deep religious feeling, Lawrence spared the mosques. "Leave their holy places," he said. At his call were but one European regiment and a small force of European artillery.

Mutiny broke out in Lucknow five days before the rising in Cawnpore. Lawrence, warned by his staff captain that the outbreak was timed to begin with the firing of the nine o'clock gun, was at dinner when the time signal was given. He listened for a moment, then turned and said: "Your friends are not punctual." He had barely spoken when a firing of muskets was heard. There was a roar of rebels. And the sky was red with the blaze of English homes.

It is a tribute to the personality of Lawrence that only one of the three native regiments in Lucknow revolted. As many as six hundred of the rest decided to stand by him and fight against their own countrymen. Sepoys on pension emerged from their retirement to rally round the old flag. They came in hundreds, all aged, some sightless, many limbless. They begged to be allowed to serve the English. Lawrence selected eighty of them for the defence of the Residency.

All Oudh was soon in revolt. Risings occurred in every station. Officers were murdered. Women and children were put to the sword, or fled into the jungle to die there. There was chaos everywhere.

Lawrence made a brave effort to stem the tide of rebellion by stern measures. Every day large batches of mutineers were rounded up and hanged. But with the influx of other rebels the swollen mobs closed in on the Residency. Then what the entire white population had been dreading so long occurred. A siege was begun. The Europeans, men, women and children, were pent in while the enemy guns tore through the Residency walls.

At first there was terror. Women screamed and fainted; then they began to pray; and with prayer came courage.

One of the first enemy shots landed at the feet of Lawrence as he worked in his study. The others begged him to move to a less exposed part of the building, but he merely laughed, declaring that no rebel could hope to land a second shell in the same place.

None the less that is what happened. The very next morning, while Lawrence was still in bed giving instructions to his staff captain, a shell burst upon them. Through the dust of falling masonry, the captain's alarmed voice cried: "Sir Henry, Sir Henry, are you hurt?" There was no answer—and then, feebly, came the words: "I am killed." When the dust had cleared the coverlet was red with blood. The General was lifted tenderly and borne into another room, but his life could not be saved. By sheer force of will he contrived to live for two days while he assigned the duties of his successors. About him hardened soldiers stood weeping, and when he died each in turn stooped and kissed his forehead as one would a father's. His body was lowered into a hurriedly dug grave, above which, at his own dictation, was inscribed this epitaph: "Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May the Lord have mercy on his soul."

He was succeeded by Brigadier Inglis, who found the Residency by no means an easy position to hold. It was not a fortified building, but just an ordinary dwelling-house used in normal times for the residence of the Chief Commissioner. In expectation of a siege crude mud defences had been run up, and trenches dug; but the work had not gone far when the outbreak occurred. Actually no part of the Residency was safe. Bullets tore through every wall. Women woke up in the morning to find bullets lying within a few inches of their pillows. Wounded soldiers were killed as they lay in hospital. Every day fifteen to twenty people died in the Residency. And there were not many there—seventeen hundred in all, a large proportion of them natives. As every man was needed

at the posts, white women did all the menial work. Still, the stench of decaying matter daily became more intolerable. The soldiers slept in their clothes—when they slept at all, for they stood, sick or well, for twenty hours at a time, dozing in snatches that were rudely shattered by the alarms. The rain, the sun, the flies made all rest impossible. The food was bad, the rooms overcrowded in the shot-riddled Residency.

Then news came through. A loyal Indian leapt the entrenchment and informed the beleaguered garrison that Havelock was hurrying to their aid from Cawnpore. In another week or so he would be with them.

Could they hold out? Lawrence, when he lay dying, had thought that the enemy might be held off for a fortnight. It would be five weeks in all before Havelock could reach them. Could they hold out?

The rebels laid mines below the Residency, hoping to blow it up, but Captain Fulton, with cocked ear and uncanny skill, detected every muffled sound of pickaxe and crowbar. Wherever the rebels dug, he was able to sink a shaft and wait for them with pistol and lantern as they came through. Above, repeated assaults were hurled at the Residency by howling hordes. Once the mutineers advanced so close to the walls that they were able to grip the muskets of the English with their hands. But they were driven off. Through the gallant defence it was impossible for them to break.

Havelock did not reach them at the appointed hour. Mutineers barred the road. Repeated battles were fought. Twice he had to fall back on Cawnpore. Meanwhile precious days were being lost. Despairing of the future, many of the natives who had remained loyal to the British began suddenly to desert. In the crumbling Residency there hung an air of despondency. Only their unyielding spirit kept the British going, for lack of rest and nourishment had all but sapped their vitality.

The Government of India found Havelock's reverses very dispiriting. Lucknow, they felt, must be relieved. They were aware of Havelock's difficulties. They knew that the brave old soldier had fought innumerable engagements with an ever-growing enemy horde. They knew too that he had not enough troops to follow up any successes he gained. In addition to the enemy he had to fight disease, severe tropical storms, and to march on scant rations, often for days. They knew—but they also knew Lucknow must be relieved. So they brushed Havelock aside and appointed Sir James Outram in his stead.

It must have been some solace to Havelock in his humiliation that there was no man in all India of nobler character than Outram, who by his charm and chivalry had already won the title of Bayard of India. Taking over from Havelock, Outram was touching in his graciousness. He was determined that to Havelock alone should accrue all the glory of relieving Lucknow. His very first act was to issue a Divisional Order which is without parallel in military history. It read :

“ The important duty of first relieving the garrison of Lucknow had been entrusted to Brigadier-General Havelock, C.B. ; and Major-General Outram feels that it is due to this distinguished officer, and the strenuous and noble exertions which he has already made to effect that object, that to him should accrue the honour of that achievement. Major-General Outram is confident that the great end for which General Havelock and his brave troops have so long and so gloriously fought, will now, under the blessing of Providence, be accomplished.

“ The Major-General, therefore, in gratitude for, and admiration of, the brilliant deeds in arms achieved by General Havelock and his gallant troops, will cheerfully waive his rank on the occasion ; and will accompany the force to Lucknow in his civil capacity as Chief

Commissioner of Oudh, tendering his military services to General Havelock as a volunteer."

Meanwhile the death-roll in Lucknow grew larger daily; and more and more natives deserted. Yet they waited patiently, for there was nothing else they could do. Then, by a miracle, the enemy began suddenly to scatter. The scant, hollow-faced band in the Residency saw, and could hardly believe their eyes. The mutinous sepoys fled from their posts. The citizens of Lucknow raced in panic through the streets until they got clear of the city. There came nearer the tramp of English troops. And then Highlanders, Sikhs and Madras Fusiliers swung into sight. . . . From the Residency there rose a feeble yet heartfelt cheer, and as the soldiers came, the women collapsed. The men could offer no more than limp, emaciated hands to those who at last had relieved them. The fresh soldiers, here after twelve bloody battles on the Lucknow road, stooped to take up in their arms the wondering children. Even the hardy Highland faces were wet.

6

Lucknow had been relieved. Yet there was no hope of escape. No way out of Lucknow. The surrounding country was in the hands of the rebels. It was impossible to bear away the sick and the dying, the women and the children. The relieving army realised that they themselves would be besieged soon. So they set about widening the area of defence, so that they should not remain confined within the narrow limits of the Residency. They seized the Moslem palaces along the river and ran up defences. As the rebels closed in upon them, they sallied out to attack and harass, knowing that was better than remaining on the defensive. There were daily battles. Again the guns began to play on the English. Again the walls were rent and plaster crumbled. Again death snatched from

their midst friends and children. Lucknow had to wait to be relieved again.

A larger force was slowly being assembled. Help was needed not only in Lucknow but in other parts of India where the mutineers were triumphant. But help had not been easy to obtain. Shiploads of troops were being rushed to India from the trading stations in China, from the Cape, from England, and from the most distant parts of the scattered Empire. At their head was Sir Colin Campbell, an elderly soldier who had served under Wellington in the Peninsula and in the American War of 1814. He knew India well. He had fought many campaigns in the country.

Campbell set out from Calcutta with this new army. There were few railways then. His men marched along the Grand Trunk Road, where vast bodies of mutineers lay in wait for them. Every inch of the road had to be fought for, but daily Campbell approached nearer and nearer to Lucknow.

Here a new problem confronted him. Who would guide him into the besieged city? He had maps; but he needed a personal guide for information as to enemy posts: a European intelligence officer who had been through the siege and had a detailed first-hand knowledge of the countryside. Yet what hope was there of an Englishman getting through the enemy lines to Campbell?

A clerk named Kavanagh volunteered for this service. He was a man of fine physique and extraordinary daring. Accompanied by a native and himself disguised as a mutineer, he broke out of Lucknow by night. They evaded the rebel sentries, crossed the lines, forded a river, lost their way, then found themselves to their horror in the very midst of the enemy. Yet Kavanagh contrived to bluff his way through and reached Campbell in safety. He was rewarded for this exploit with the V.C. But the honour—or more possibly the ordeal—turned his head. Kavanagh became vain and boastful. He brought out a

book entitled *How I won the V.C.*, in which he likened himself to the great heroes of history and mythology. Indeed, his own motives, he took care to point out, were far nobler and more disinterested than theirs.

Still, the services he rendered Campbell and his besieged countrymen at Lucknow were of the utmost value. Campbell found entry not easy. There was severe hand-to-hand fighting at every step. The bloodshed was appalling. As they approached, the garrison fought their way outwards to join them. Amid hoarse cheering they reunited.

In the hour of triumph Havelock died of dysentery. He lies buried in the fields outside Lucknow.

7

The Ranee of Jhansi availed herself of the troubled times to avenge a grievance she had against the British. Lord Dalhousie had been indiscreet enough to confiscate her State merely because she had provided no legitimate male heir to the throne. From the small allowance he gave in compensation, he had told her to meet all her husband's debts.

She was angry, but she could do nothing save bide her time. The moment she heard of the rising at Meerut she roused the sepoy of the Jhansi garrison, among whom, surprisingly, there was not one British soldier. The sepoy listened to her. She was young and beautiful. They were stirred by a sense of chivalry and vowed they would restore her to the throne. They rose and murdered their officers.

The small English population of the town took refuge in the fort. But they had neither guns nor supplies. They were in no position to face a siege. What could they do but apply to the Ranee for a safe custody to the border? She refused to see any of their ambassadors. Each in turn was put to death. To the refugees, meanwhile, she sent

the assurance that if they cared to leave the fort they could rely on her to do everything possible for their safety.

As soon as they emerged the Ranee's soldiers fell upon the English refugees and slaughtered all, men, women and children. The Princess was then proclaimed Queen.

She was a woman of astonishing foresight. She realised that at the earliest opportunity the English would try to recover the State. So she made hasty preparations for its defence. Affairs of state were reorganised with admirable dexterity. A large army was raised. Extraordinarily enough her staunchest ally was the woman who had been her greatest rival in the affections of her husband, the late Rajah of Jhansi.

But the English ignored the Ranee for the present. There was sterner work to be done and no Europeans in Jhansi to rescue. Early the following year, however, with the disturbances in most parts of India quelled, Sir Hugh Rose marched to recover Jhansi.

The lovely young Ranee called a council of war. She had at her disposal an army of 12,000 men. Sir Hugh had less than a fifth that number. Besides, Jhansi was guarded by a granite fort, secure on a lofty rock. Yet, with amazing audacity, Sir Hugh hurled his small force against it.

It proved a stern fight. The sun's glare was blinding. The hot, keen wind smote the faces of the English, who could only keep on fighting by winding wet towels about their heads. On the other side, fired by the example of their princess, the women of Jhansi stood shoulder to shoulder with the troops, handing out the ammunition and working the batteries.

Eventually the English guns succeeded in battering down the parapets. Soon a breach appeared. But just as victory seemed assured, the news came that Tantia Topi, the Nana's brutal general who had organised the slaughter at Cawnpore, was galloping to the aid of the Ranee with a

vast force of 22,000 men. The British were thus caught between two fires.

But Sir Hugh Rose kept his head. He dealt first with Tantia Topi and hurled him back. Then he made an assault upon the town. As the English approached the breach, tom-toms were beaten to summon the townsfolk of Jhansi to their Ranee's side. They came in their thousands. Stones, blocks of wood, and trees were hurled down upon the advancing English. Yet they continued to fight their way in. Many of the rebels were seized with such panic that they jumped into wells, but the English dragged them out and shot them. The streets were knee-deep in corpses. That night, under cover of darkness, the Ranee crept out of the fort and fled. But her implacable hate of the English prompted her to ally herself with every enemy. From place to place she flitted. Clad in male attire, she mounted a horse and even fought in the field against the English. In engagement after engagement she figured, until the British troops, resolved on her capture, began to close in on her from all sides. Even then she formed a bold plan. It was no less than the capture of Gwalior, a large and powerful native State. The ruler was opposed to her design. But she flung her forces against him, defeated him in battle, won over his troops, and drove him out of his State. She then set about strengthening her position and awaited the coming of the English.

To Sir Hugh Rose it was inconceivable that this bold design could have succeeded. He hurried to Gwalior, but found himself engaged in severe fighting with the Ranee's troops. In one of these battles a slight girlish form was seen to sway and fall from her horse. They hurried to her but she was dead. It was the Ranee of Jhansi. "The best and bravest military leader of the rebels," said Sir Hugh Rose.

Tantia Topi, who was with the Ranee at Gwalior, fled

with all the money and jewels in the Gwalior treasury. For nine months the British pursued him. He was at last captured and hanged in the presence of a vast multitude. The Nana Sahib was never heard of again. Nobody knows what became of him. He was reported to be alive and in hiding in 1913. He would have been over ninety years old at the time.

The execution of Tantia Topi was the last event of importance in the suppression of the Mutiny. Small bands of marauders remained active for a time in various parts of the country ; for a licence to rob and kill is ever attractive to the lawless. But they were vigorously stamped out by the British.

8

It took more than two years to restore peace.

Throughout the Mutiny all the larger native States remained loyal to the English. Some even assisted actively in its suppression. The most notable assistance was given by Nepal, which but a few years before had itself been engaged in a war with Britain. The Sikhs, whose kingdom had been absorbed by the English less than ten years before, proved most loyal of all troops in British service.

From a rising of sepoys the Mutiny grew into a general revolt of the peoples. Or, more correctly, the discontented of all sorts availed themselves of the opportunity : Hindus with private grievances, Moslems anxious for the restoration of the Mogul Empire, marauders just to partake in the loot.

There was a bewildering maze of local risings. In the out-of-the-way districts the slaughter of white women and children was appalling. Some escaped only to die in the jungles. A few were dragged into some sealed harem. Others were sheltered by kindly natives, intermarried, and became absorbed in the native population. Here and there small bands, after indescribable hardships,

managed to reach safety. There were, for instance, the English men and women who escaped from the mutineers at Sitapore. They numbered five: Sir Mountstuart Jackson, his sister Madeline, a young lieutenant, a sergeant-major and a child of three named Sophy Christian. After rushing in terror through the jungle, their bare feet torn by thorns, their limbs weary, their clothes in tatters, the five approached a petty Rajah and begged his protection. For a night he consented to lodge them. He placed them in a cowshed. The next morning he had them moved to an empty building at the far end of his estate. Here they found three other English refugees, Captain and Mrs. Orr and their child.

The Rajah drove out the Orrs, to make room for the newcomers. He could not, he said, shelter them all. The dislodged family had to take refuge in the jungle, where fires were kept alight all night to keep off the wolves and tigers, though these very fires, they knew, must serve to betray their whereabouts to mutineers prowling in the neighbourhood for fugitives.

After the mutineers had gone, the Orrs were allowed to return. But they were not allowed to stay long. The Rajah regarded the risk as too great. Discovery would bring upon him the unwelcome attention of the rebels. So in order to cover up his lapse, and in a measure to make up for it, he not only turned out the English but set the mutineers on their track. The bewildered fugitives knew not which way to go. Their agony was intensified by little Sophy's recurrent cry of, "Why doesn't mother come?" Mother had been murdered by the rebels at Sitapore.

The Rajah's hirelings actually dragged the fugitives from the jungle, placed them in carts and took them to the rebels. In charge of these arrangements was the Rajah's lawyer, who had in the past enjoyed many kindnesses from Orr. But he was not disposed now to remember them. During the long journey the sergeant-major fell gravely

ill. The young lieutenant went mad. They were all jolted along to Lucknow where they were borne through the streets for the crowds to gape and jeer at, and then flung into prison. A few days later the four men were led away, placed against a wall and shot. The women heard the firing squad, but were helpless. Little Sophy died. Mrs. Orr, her child, and Madeline Jackson, contrived, with the aid of a friendly native, to escape to safety.

9

The re-establishment of English supremacy was welcomed throughout the country. The natives put on their best clothes and lined the roads to cheer the approaching troops. They had had enough of rapine and slaughter. It was too much like the old days of Hindu and Moslem rule. The populace wanted peace. Only the English had been able to give them security.

The outworn form of governing India through a trading corporation had to end. Parliament abolished the East India Company—oddly enough, as had been prophesied by the natives, exactly a hundred years after the Company's rule in India had begun.¹ The country was transferred to the Crown. The Governor-General became Viceroy of India.

The transfer was marked by a Proclamation assuring India that Britain desired no further extension of territory, and that at no time would she interfere in any way with the religious beliefs of the peoples.

And the Queen of England became Empress of India.

¹ With Plassey in 1757.

CHAPTER V

CLAMOUR

I

THE failure of the Mutiny proved to the disaffected elements in India that no rising could ever hope to succeed without careful organisation, inspired leadership, and possibly the assistance also of a foreign power possessed of resources equal at least to Britain's.

Meanwhile every precaution was taken by the British against a recurrence. Indians were prevented from possessing firearms. The Army was reorganised. The great disproportion of British to Indian troops was remedied. In the North, where the Mutiny had been at its worst, there was now stationed one English soldier for every sepoy. In the calmer South, it became the rule that at least a third of the forces should be white. Practically all units of native artillery were abolished.

But it was not their purpose to curb disaffection so much as to cure it ; to win, if possible, the goodwill of the populace. So to the rebels who had been rounded up in their thousands pardons were freely issued. They were almost all released.

Immediate steps were taken to improve conditions generally. The religious scruples of the peoples, as guaranteed by Royal Proclamation, were most rigidly respected. Never again would caste be in danger.

In addition, so as to remove the barriers that divided the governing race from the governed, Indians were given a voice in the direction of affairs. During the entire period of Mogul rule and for centuries preceding it, the populace had been denied this privilege.

The English themselves so far had ruled through a Governor-General and a small executive council. Now an advisory board was appointed, with Indians as members. A similar board was set up in each province to assist the Governor.

An even closer association was promised and, as an earnest of their sincerity, the English began to train the diversified peoples for the arduous tasks of democracy. An elaborate scheme of higher education was prepared. Universities were established. Countless secondary schools were opened.

At the same time a new era of prosperity was ushered in. From the barbaric pomp and poverty of medievalism India began to pass into the civilisation of modernity. Railway construction was begun on an extensive scale—with commercial as well as strategic advantages. A network of telegraphs was flung across the continent. Wide stretches of arid desert land were irrigated by canals and made to yield rich harvests. Sanitation was extensively applied. A dozen years were added to the length of life. The golden age returned.

Disaffection soon began to fade. The Mohammedans, bitterest of Britain's foes, since they attributed the Mogul downfall, quite unjustly, to Britain's machinations, emerged from the Mutiny with a completely altered outlook. They realised that they had far more to fear from the Hindus than from the English. The two religions conflicted in their ideals, in their philosophies, and in their practices. Each believed that the other was a menace. For centuries there had been clashes between them—and the Mutiny made it abundantly clear that without the strong arm of Britain to ensure peace, there would be bloodshed whenever Hindu met Moslem. And as the smaller community the Moslems viewed all Hindu ambitions with hostility.

Not that the Hindus themselves were by any means opposed to English rule. Only a mere handful, the Mah-rattas, remained disaffected. They remembered that power to rule all India had been within their grasp when Britain with a ruthless sword checked their predatory career. The cruellest generals of the Mutiny—the Nana Sahib

and Tantia Topi—were both Mahrattas. The Mahrattas alone continued to scheme for power : their one resolve was still to drive out the British. For the present they could do nothing ; but we shall see how in the years that lay ahead they came to launch a new and more subtle campaign against the English.

The rulers of the independent States, meanwhile, whose warm attachment to British rule had been demonstrated so gratifyingly during the recent ordeal, were drawn even closer to Britain by the terms of the new settlement. They were assured that all their rights would be respected. They were guaranteed protection from family intrigue and political conspiracy. The policy of lapse was abolished. Never again would an inch of their territory be confiscated. If there was no heir—a not uncommon consequence of degeneracy—then they could adopt one, if they pleased. If there was gross misrule and the people cried out for deliverance, even then the State would remain intact. The ruler would merely be set aside and another chosen from the same family ; or if the heir was immature a regency would be appointed. In an extremity, Britain might undertake the rule of the State for a time, handing it back as soon as affairs had been set in order.

It would have been inconsistent with her paramountcy for Britain to permit millions of subjects to live under the tyranny of a cruel or demented Rajah. As it happened, need for intervention arose early in Baroda. The Gaekwar plagued his subjects with indescribable torments, while he squandered all the revenues on his own pleasures. The people appealed to Britain for aid. The English Resident in Baroda, Colonel Phayre, instantly opened an enquiry, and the Gaekwar retaliated by planning his assassination. Diamond dust was sprinkled over the Englishman's food. The Colonel, however, contrived to escape death. There was now no course left to the English but to remove this oppressive ruler. His Highness was arrested for

attempted murder, and tried by a commission of six. But the three Indian members refused point-blank to convict him. So he was merely removed and a relative raised to the dignity of Gaekwar.

To the multitudes of India it was now made manifest that in place of a trading corporation known to them as "John Company," there was on the throne a ruler as great and as magnificent as any Mogul. From time to time the peoples were afforded a glimpse of a member of the new Imperial household. First the Duke of Edinburgh, a younger of Queen Victoria's sons, was sent on an Indian tour. Then the heir to the throne (later King Edward VII) came, attended by pomp and pageantry that equalled in magnificence all India had ever known.

2

But the security, the prosperity, and especially the education they enjoyed made the Indians ever clamorous for more opportunities. Although the twenty years that followed the Mutiny saw bigger strides in political progress than Indians had ever known, it left them not grateful but restive.

They were encouraged in this attitude, oddly enough, by Englishmen. John Bright, the great Free Trader, seized every opportunity for denouncing the "wrongs" done to India by the English. He had himself never been in the country and was in no position to appreciate the full humour of labelling as "unanimous" the "demands" of simple, unlettered millions who were as unaware of them as of the existence of John Bright himself. He blamed the English especially for the poverty of India, yet Bright would have been among the first to protest had England attempted to cure that poverty by interfering with the catastrophic drain of religion.¹

¹ See Chapter VI.

He was supported, both in Parliament and out, by Henry Fawcett. So grateful were the clamant Indians to Fawcett, that when he was unseated, they readily subscribed for his return from another constituency. Other of their supporters were Charles Bradlaugh, the errand boy turned demagogue, and his disciple Annie Besant.

India's cause, it must regretfully be recorded, was often championed not from motives of altruism but for party advantages. Yet, whatever the purpose of the manoeuvres in Britain, in India itself echoes were aroused that the trend of world events served only to deepen.

The world had been rapidly narrowing with the advance of invention. London from being three or four months away was brought within a distance of weeks by the steamships, and of hours by the new electric cables. News spread with astonishing rapidity. Whatever happened the entire world knew of within a short span of time. Education had already fertilised the Indian mind—or rather an infinitesimal part of it, since only three or four per cent of the peoples were literate even in their own languages. Upon this soil was being sprinkled seeds of revolutionary thought from Italy and Russia and Egypt. Soon there came news of the bitter hostility between Russia and England. India learned of the outlet to the sea that Russia sought, of the steady advances it was making across the highlands of Central Asia to the edge of India's frontier. Hope began to arise that Russia might be glad to assist Indians in embarrassing Britain.

It was at this time that, as we have seen,¹ fear of Russia involved Britain in an unscrupulous attack upon Afghanistan, which led to a retreat in panic through the passes where thousands of English men and women perished. For the first time since the Mutiny Indians began to wonder if Britain was really invincible. And, as if to encourage them, came news of still further reverses elsewhere. From

¹ See Chapter IV.

South Africa came tidings of Britain's defeat by savage, paint-stained Zulus at Isandlwana. At Majuba Hill the Boers were triumphant. Then came the abandonment of the entire Soudan after the murder of General Gordon at Khartoum. These were rude shocks to British prestige. The coloured peoples were triumphing. The disaffected in India reflected—and found new hope.

From the Indian press there rose a sudden cry for "Freedom." There were denunciations of Britain. Russia was extolled. The clamour grew, the tone became dangerous. The peoples of India were urged to rise up and murder the English. Every day there was a vigorous stirring of the passions. Who knows to what fresh disaster the country would have been driven had not the Government (as Governments must) checked the awful torrent of sedition. The Vernacular Press Act was passed. It aimed at prevention rather than punishment. It served its purpose. Only once was there need for it to be applied.

3

True to her promises Britain continued meanwhile to associate Indians still more closely with the work of governance. In 1883 district boards were created on the lines of English county councils and rural boards. The municipalities were at the same time enlarged to accommodate Indians. The Viceroy (Lord Ripon) made it clear that these developments merely formed part of India's training. "It is not," he said, "primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as a measure of political and popular education." Slowly the new democratic structure was being raised. Upon these smaller units of governance the glory of the superstructure would piece by piece be placed.

But the same Viceroy foolishly brought forward a further

advance which was well-intended but ill-timed and served merely to raise a barrier of racial hostility between Indian and English. This was a Bill to confer on Indian Justices of the Peace the right to try Europeans. It seems to-day but a fair attempt at equalising the status of the two communities. But to the small and scattered bands of Europeans, working under great difficulties in isolated outposts of that vast empire, it betokened nothing but disaster. By prestige alone could the white man command respect. How else could one Englishman hope to rule tracts of territory as large as Yorkshire, with a teeming population numbering many millions! Destroy that prestige, compel a white man to appear as a suppliant before an Indian, and the whole system must crumble.

The Europeans banded themselves together to prevent the measure (known as the Ilbert Bill) from passing into law. The Indians organised too. A great deal of bad blood was quite unnecessarily stirred. Eventually the Bill was thrown out. Lord Ripon resigned and returned home.

The next year the Indian National Congress was born.

Actually it had nothing whatsoever to do with this agitation. It was founded not by clamouring Indians eager to organise, voice their grievances, and agitate for better conditions; but by an Englishman, a retired civil servant, at the suggestion of the Viceroy who had come to replace Lord Ripon.

The new Viceroy (Lord Dufferin) felt that the Government of India stood most in need of a body of opinion that could undertake the duties of Her Majesty's Opposition. It would be of inestimable value to know what native circles thought of the English and their policy. The newspapers were wild, extravagant, and unreliable. On the platforms, there was no unified expression of opinion, but a thousand voices crying in a thousand wildernesses. Indian politicians, he felt, should be persuaded

to meet in yearly conference to point out to the Government what needed to be done or undone.

The suggestion was made to Mr. A. O. Hume, a Scot in his late fifties, who, after long and admirable service, had been offered a Lieutenant-Governorship, but preferred to assist the Indians in this unofficial manner. A son of the Hume who had founded the English Radical Party, he had already been striving to weld into a national consciousness the diversified elements of that vast continent. He wrote letters to students to instruct them in the art of serving their country. "If you . . . cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong and our adversaries right . . . then, at present, at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she enjoys. Only, if this be so, let us hear no more factious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings and treated like children, for you will have proved yourself such."

Hume wrote poems to rouse the populace : the poems are used to this day as battle-cries of freedom :

*" Sons of Ind, why sit ye idle,
Wait ye for some Deva's aid ?
Buckle to, be up and doing !
Nations by themselves are made ! "*

He toured England to win the support of Parliament, press and public. Indian leaders rallied round him and Congress met for the first time in Bombay during the Christmas vacation of 1885. It was attended by seventy-two delegates. Proceedings concluded with hearty cheers for Queen Victoria.

In those early days Indians readily acknowledged the great advantages the country enjoyed under English rule.

They had peace—at last ; security ; the right of free speech ; and above all the opportunity of meeting and discussing and understanding each other through the medium of the English language.

The following year Congress met in Calcutta, for it was felt that only by assembling in different towns each year could they best spread their doctrines from end to end of India. The President was Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, a Parsee and the first Indian to sit in the House of Commons. He paid this remarkable tribute to British rule :

“ I ask whether in the most glorious days of Hindu rule you could imagine the possibility of a meeting of this kind, whether even Hindus of all different provinces of the kingdom could have collected and spoken as one nation. . . . It is under the civilising rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none and allowed to speak our minds without the least fear and the least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule and British rule only. . . . We are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us, of which the very existence of this Congress is a proof in a nutshell. Were it not for those blessings of British rule I could not have come here to-day . . . without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed in my absence ; nor could you have come from every corner of the land.”

Englishmen played an active part in the deliberations of Congress. Many occupied the presidential chair : Mr. George Yule as early as 1888 and Sir William Wedderburn in 1889. The following year the new Viceroy (Lord Lansdowne) declared publicly that Congress was “ perfectly legitimate in itself. . . . The Government of India recognise that the Congress movement is regarded as representing in India what in Europe would be called the more advanced Liberal Party, as distinguished from the

great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it."

So India developed politically. On the one hand, the populace were being encouraged to take an interest in public affairs and to voice their opinions in Congress; on the other, an outlet was being provided for them on district boards, in municipalities, in the advisory councils of the Governmental executives, which in 1892 were expanded still further to include members elected from the district boards and municipalities. To these legislators were now conceded new rights. Indians were given an opportunity of discussing the annual Budget and of questioning the motives of Governor or Governor-General.

4

The populace—or so much of it as was able to grasp what these moves portended—were satisfied. The rest were blissfully indifferent. They were content to cultivate their small patches of land, to think of marriages and harvests and the normal round of village life, of priests and friends and the moneylender to whom all owed so much. They knew nothing of the wide Indian world. They had never even heard of municipalities or of the concessions extended to the legislative assemblies. They constituted the millions. Those who were fitted by education and training to avail themselves of political advancement numbered mere thousands. Still less numerous were a discontented few—mostly Mahrattas who still brooded over the might-have-been. They were Brahmins, all of them; for the Brahmins are by heredity not only the spiritual but the intellectual leaders of the Hindus. To them have always been entrusted all affairs of State. When the marauding career of the Mahrattas was checked, the Mahratta Brahmins suffered most. Their offices passed to the agents of British rule. Since the Mutiny, when the

Nana Sahib expressed their outraged feelings in the vilest deeds, they had been waiting and plotting.

The repeal of the Press Act in 1881 provided them with an opportunity of launching a revolution of an entirely new order. The armed rising had failed. It had been met by the serried forces of established rule, which had proved too strong for the disorganised, rebellious hordes. But the secret thrust of bomb and dagger might conceivably succeed. Thus, one by one, each of the small band of Englishmen in India could be removed. Then the Mahrattas would return once more to their old predatory glory and the Brahmins enjoy again the spoils of administration.

A Mahratta Brahmin named Bal Gangadhar Tilak constituted himself leader of this veiled rebellion. He was a plump-faced man, with thick lips and heavy eyelids. The face of a dreamer ! Yet essentially he was a man who believed in action—by others if not by himself. He realised from the start that politics meant nothing to the multitude. By formulas, by sonorous bleatings about nationalism nothing would be achieved. Religion alone touched the lives of all. Religion alone could stir them. So he resolved to use religion for his end.

He began by ranging himself on the side of orthodoxy. To all reforms of Hinduism he expressed himself as utterly and irretrievably opposed. In order to stir Hindu passions he even took to denouncing their inherent foes, the Moham-medans. He organised societies for the express purpose of furthering trouble between the two communities. It was his desire to unleash the fanaticism pent-up within the breast of every fervent Hindu. With this all he sought could be achieved. He set up gymnasiums to train Hindu youths. Here instruction was given secretly in the use of firearms. He held festivals in memory of Shivaji, the great leader of the Mahrattas, so that all should pattern themselves upon his ruthlessness and lust for blood.

“ Unless Hindus,” declared Tilak, “ are prepared to employ force they must remain impotent witnesses of the gradual downfall of all their ancient institutions.” Treachery, guile, every villainy in the calendar they should summon to their aid. He reminded them of the occasion in the valley below Pratabghar when Shivaji found himself confronted by the massed forces of the Mogul. With no way out Shivaji suggested a conference between the Moslem general Afzul Khan and himself. They should meet, he said, half-way between their armies. They met—and just as Shivaji bent to greet his guest, he plunged into the Moslem’s bowels his famous hooked gauntlet, known as the “ tiger’s claw.” At this signal the Mahratta army sprang out of ambush and cut the Mohammedans to pieces.

This treachery was extolled by Tilak. “ It is needless,” he declared, “ to make further researches as to the killing of Afzul Khan. Let us even assume that Shivaji deliberately planned and executed the murder. Was the act good or evil ? This question cannot be answered from the standpoint of the Penal Code or of the laws of Manu or according to the principles of morality laid down in the systems of the West or the East. . . . Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzul Khan ? The answer to this question can be found in the Mahabharata¹ itself. The divine Krishna, teaching in the Gita, tells us that we may kill even our teachers and our kinsmen, and no blame attaches if we are not actuated by selfish desires. Shivaji did nothing from a desire to fill his own belly. It was in a praiseworthy object that he murdered Afzul Khan for the good of others. If thieves enter our house and we have not strength to drive them out, should we not without hesitation shut them in and burn them alive ? God has conferred on the foreigners no grant of Hindustan inscribed on imperishable brass. Shivaji strove to drive them forth out of the land of his birth, but he was guiltless of the sin

¹ See Chapter VI and Appendix B.

of covetousness. Do not circumscribe your vision like frogs in a well. Rise above the Penal Code into the rarified atmosphere of the sacred Bhaghavad Gita and consider the action of great men."

He urged Hindus to stand by their religion and play their sacred music even outside Moslem mosques, knowing that in the ensuing riot between the two communities the British by intervening would earn the hostility of both.

In 1898 he launched a no-rent campaign. The following year Poona was swept by a terrible plague. The Indians themselves despaired of checking the epidemic except by prayer. The English, however, applied every law of sanitation. Houses were searched and disinfected so that Indian lives might be saved. Tilak saw in this just the opportunity he sought. If white men strode into Hindu homes it was an outrage on religion. He raised afresh the cry of caste in danger. A vigorous campaign was launched in the press. Popular frenzy was raised to white heat. There was the inevitable outcome. The Plague Commissioner, Mr. Rand, was waylaid and murdered.

They selected for their foul deed a night of festivity. The sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's coronation was being celebrated throughout India. In Poona a large reception was given in Government House. As the guests drove home in their carriages shots were heard, but were mistaken for fireworks let off in Her Majesty's honour. The first carriage went on. From the second came a woman's cry. "For God's sake stop," she cried; for her husband, Lieutenant Ayerst, was covered with blood. She took him in her arms. He was dead. In another carriage lolled Mr. Rand, alone—apparently weary at that late hour. But later it was discovered that he had been shot too.

These dread murders were the act of a young Mahratta Brahmin, who confessed that Tilak's preaching had incited

him. He was sentenced to death, but Tilak himself, with deplorable lenience, was prosecuted merely for publishing a seditious article. He was sent to prison for a short term, which he did not even complete. He promised to be of good behaviour, was released, and instantly broke his pledge.

5

He realised, however, the need for caution. Britain's overthrow would have to be plotted with the greatest secrecy. Tilak and his friends stretched their tentacles across India, but the rest of the country was unresponsive. Only the Mahrattas seemed sufficiently interested in the expulsion of the English. Bengal, with its congested millions, and its swarm of discontented young men, lacking an outlet for their costly education, offered hope as a recruiting ground. But Mahratta scheming and whispering were rejected.

Tilak, however, went on. He formed secret societies. These attracted a few fanatics, who served as both agents and missionaries. The agents strove to collect arms—by theft, by raids on gunsmiths, and by smuggling; the missionaries insinuated their way into the schools as masters so as to pervert the minds of children.

It took ten years before anything could be achieved. By that time arms were being obtained from foreign countries or through the French settlement at Chandernagore, for foreign powers still have small possessions in India. Offices were also opened in London, Paris, and in other parts of Europe. Some of the revolutionary agents themselves went to Europe to acquire a knowledge of explosives, and on their return set up private laboratories in their own homes where bombs and explosive letters were now being manufactured. Funds were of course required. For this volunteers were enrolled so that—after the manner of their Mahratta ancestors—they might

by banditry, or dacoity as it is called, extract from the rich all they needed. Men and women were waylaid and robbed on the roads. Others were plundered in their homes. Those who resisted were killed. The outrages were justified with extraordinary glibness. "If the revolution is being brought about for the benefit of society, then it is perfectly just to collect money from society for this purpose. No sin but rather virtue attaches to the destruction of this small Government for the sake of some higher Government."

A sudden fillip to these activities was given inadvertently in Bengal by Lord Curzon by his stubborn pursuit of an unpopular policy. He had found this vast and growing Province far too large for administrative purposes and had resolved upon splitting it up. The Bengalis protested, but he was indifferent to their pleas. Their claims, he found, were false. Bengal had neither history nor tradition. It was not a nation. But in view of the attitude of the agitators he would have been wise to have divided it differently. He could have separated such units as Assam and Bihar without actually dismembering Bengal.

His partition (as it was called) provided the minions of anarchy with the whip they sought. They used it vigorously and roused the countryside to action. Religion was cunningly blended with politics. The sacred domain of their goddess Kali (it was said) was being rent in twain and torn from her breast. Could any pious Hindu stand by and allow this to be done?

The grossest misrepresentations were indulged in. The agitators stopped at nothing. Every shade of interest was catered for. Landholders were told that the change would lead to the cancellation of all existing terms of tenure. The peasants were warned that they would be compulsorily migrated to the tea plantations and jungles of Eastern Bengal and Assam. To win over the artisans a cry of "Buy Indian" (Swadeshi) was raised and a boycott imposed on foreign goods.

Even so nothing was achieved.

But the agitators persevered. For two years they campaigned, writing, preaching, composing songs. They wormed their way into the schools. They dressed themselves as *yogis* and *fakirs* and wandered through the villages preaching sedition. They wrote books. They started newspapers, which were allowed by an indolent Government to pour out their poison for two years. An intense racial hatred was slowly being stirred up. The *Yugantar* (or New Era) openly incited the people to rebellion. "The number of Englishmen in this country is not above one lakh and a half (150,000), and what is the number of English officials in each district? If you are firm in your resolution you can in a single day bring English rule to an end. Lay down your life, but first take a life." And again: "Much work can be done by the revolutionaries very cautiously spreading the gospel of independence among these native troops. When the time arrives for a practical collision with the ruling powers, the revolutionists not only get these troops among their ranks, but also the arms with which the ruling power supplied them."

In every corner of the agitated Province secret societies sprang up. Volunteers were enrolled, mostly boys, some not yet twelve years old. They were made to take their vows on bended knee before the goddess Kali. In their hands they held a sword. On their heads was placed the Bhagavad Gita. The vows embraced self-discipline, unquestioning obedience, and the sacrifice even of family and self for country. The boys were sent out with bombs and pistols to stalk the white man. They were told to note how many attended the church services on Sundays so that at a given signal all might be massacred.

At the same time a more cautious and constitutional agitation was conducted by Surendranath Banerjea, a lean, bearded, weak-eyed Bengali, who was gifted with a rare

eloquence. Educated in England, once himself a member of the Civil Service, Banerjea had played a prominent part both in the foundation and in the deliberations of Congress. But the anarchists would have none of him. They denounced even Congress for its caution. They clamoured for assassinations, bomb outrages and dacoities.

The surprising tolerance of the English Government had the inevitable outcome. A reign of terror followed. Yet the earliest crimes were still-born, for the Bengali even in anarchy is timid by temperament.

There was a plot to rob an Indian widow's house at Rangpur, but the robbers fled when they heard that there was a sub-inspector of police in the village. The following month a large body of armed dacoits struggled with an iron safe ; but it baffled them and they retired without the plunder. Later a party of nine or ten men about to rob a jute office near Arsulia scattered when they learned that there was a double-barrelled gun in the office. On another occasion a dacoity had to be abandoned because the guide was too drunk.

The first serious incident occurred in October 1907. It was an attempt to blow up the Lieutenant-Governor's train. Some months later the train was actually derailed by a bomb. Then a man carrying some money in a bag was stabbed and robbed. An English magistrate was shot in the back. And seven armed men rushed into a native house just outside Calcutta and by threatening to murder the infant daughter extorted hundreds of rupees from her father. A few days later a picric acid bomb was thrown into the Mayor's house in the French possession, Chander-nagore, because of a law stopping the smuggling of arms through that centre by Indian anarchists.

Before the month was out the entire civilised world was startled by the murder of two Englishwomen driving peacefully in their carriage on their way home from the club. This outrage occurred in Muzaffarpur on the 30th

of April, 1908. It was late in the evening. Mrs. Kennedy, the wife of a well-known barrister, had been at the club with her daughter. As they left for home, the Judge, Mr. Kingsford, left too. It was unfortunate that the two carriages should have looked alike, for the Judge was a marked man. The Kennedys had to pass the Judge's house, and as their carriage drew near his gate a bomb was flung. The carriage was shattered. Amid the smouldering wreckage were found the injured forms of Miss Kennedy and the groom, who were killed outright. Mrs. Kennedy died later of her injuries.

The assassin escaped to the station, jumped into a train and got away. But he was pursued by an Indian policeman. He went to and fro along the line, getting out at small wayside stations and doubling back on his tracks ; but the policeman continued to shadow him and eventually arrested him. After a while the prisoner wrenched himself free, fired at the policeman, but missed. The plucky policeman rushed at the assassin, who, weary of the chase, shot himself dead. Another youth arrested later for his part in this crime, confessed in court and was hanged.

The Judge, Mr. Kingsford, seems to have borne a charmed life, for an earlier escape from the assassin was even more remarkable. Some weeks before the Kennedy outrage a bomb was posted to him in a parcel. It was cunningly packed. The conspirators had taken the trouble to obtain an English book, paste down all the pages, then scoop out the interior, so as to form a box. In this hollow they placed explosives, attached by a spring to the cover of the book, so that as soon as it was opened the book should explode.

When the parcel arrived the Judge took it unsuspectingly. A book ! He supposed it was one he had lent out, returned now with a note of thanks. Being busy, he did not trouble to open it, but left it in a corner, where it remained for more than a year. A revolutionary arrested for another crime,

referred to this in the course of his confession. The parcel was sought in the Judge's house—and there it lay, bomb and all, still intact.

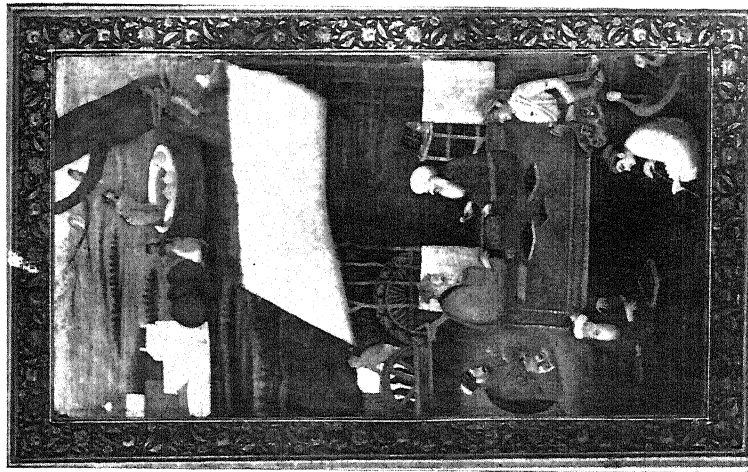
The police, always vigilant, redoubled their efforts after the dastardly Kennedy murder. They raided houses and closed the laboratories in which bombs were manufactured. Gangs of anarchists were rounded up. But their conviction was by no means easy. Witnesses refused to come forward. They were afraid to give evidence. Police officers who took part in the raids were shot dead in the streets. In one instance arms were smuggled into prison and a man who had turned informer was shot dead in the gaol itself.

The anarchy grew. Bombs were thrown in the busiest streets of Calcutta and into railway carriages. Dacoities were committed on a vast scale. The bandits wore masks and false beards so as to escape detection. They set out in bands of fifty at a time, armed with rifles, revolvers and daggers; and travelled generally by river, stealing boats as to-day bandits steal motor-cars. In one instance a courageous village watchman tried to do his duty alone against the armed gang. He was shot dead. The raiders hurried back to their boats with the loot, but were pursued by villagers and police along the banks. They fired continuously on their pursuers, killing three and wounding a large number. Another time, not finding much money in the three or four native houses they visited, they vented their anger by setting fire to several buildings in the bazaar. Other dacoits went about pretending to be police officers on a raid. They insisted on searching the premises. When admitted they robbed the poor Indians and made off with the loot.

Terror stalked in every village. The simple peasants never knew when death would come into their midst. Could the British do nothing? The Mohammedans, opposed always to Hindu schemes, were unconcerned over



MURAL PAINTING AT BAGH IN GWALIOR
Hindu Art, 7th century A.D.
(*British Museum*)



SHAH JEHAN VISITING A SAGE
Mughal Art, 17th century.
(*British Museum*)

the partition. All they knew was that trade was being lost, houses were being raided, people were being killed.

At last the British, tolerant too long, were driven to action, but not before a further attempt was made to shoot the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andrew Frazer. This occurred at the Y.M.C.A. in Calcutta in November 1908. The Lieutenant-Governor was to take the chair at a lecture to be given by an American professor, Dr. Ernest de Witt Burton. As Sir Andrew entered the hall, a youth, stationed at the entrance, raised his revolver. The weapon was no more than six inches from the Lieutenant-Governor's chest. He pulled the trigger. But the revolver misfired. Then two men acted quickly and saved His Excellency's life. While the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., Mr. Barber, struggled with the assailant, the bulky Maharajah of Burdwan covered Sir Andrew with his own body.

The following month a new law was passed to enable a special bench of High Court Judges to try such cases without jury or assessors. Anarchist societies were broken up. A few of the more dangerous revolutionaries were deported.

But the measures were not enough ; for the terrorism continued.

6

Yet the anarchists were no more than a mere handful, confined now almost entirely to Bengal, with agents here and there trying to stir up trouble in other provinces. The country as a whole viewed their activities with alarm and hostility. The monied classes had no desire to remain a prey to banditry. Parents were gravely concerned over their children, whose emotional impressionability was being converted by the teachers to the basest uses of anarchy ; for it was from the schools that the terrorists obtained their recruits.

This terrorism was also viewed with disfavour by the

constructive leaders of Indian thought who were striving through Congress for an orderly attainment of independence. They appreciated that the awakening of so vast a populace must necessarily be slow. They criticised the British Government, often bitterly—as His Majesty's Opposition does in the English House of Commons. They clamoured for reforms: the admission of Indians into the Privy Council; the extension of the jury system; the removal of Indian disabilities abroad. And they engaged in a vast campaign to spread the spirit of nationalism and unity among the simple, diversified peoples of the villages.

Tilak, fiery by temperament, impatient of prudence, an apostle of direct action, resolved finally on capturing Congress and shaking it "out of its tortoise-like gait."

The assault was made at Christmas 1907 in Surat, where three hundred years before Captain William Hawkins had landed with the vague hope of obtaining permission to trade with India. Tilak pitched his camp three miles from the Congress pandal and his cohorts fell in around him.

On the appointed day they invaded the pandal. There were 1600 Congress delegates and over 5000 visitors. Tilak's men busied themselves haranguing small groups in all parts of the enclosure.

As soon as the meeting began the extremists opened fire with interruptions. When the chairman expressed the hope that they would continue their policy of moderation and loyalty there was an uproar. Surendranath Banerjea, chief of the agitators against the partition of Bengal, rose in the hope that he would be able to restore calm. But they would not listen to him. The more he spoke the louder were the cries for Tilak from those who had been carefully distributed about the pandal. Finally Banerjea gave up. The Bengalis were so incensed at this insult to their great leader that they refused to hear anyone else. The place was reduced to pandemonium. The chairman had no alternative but to suspend the meeting.

The next day Tilak mounted the platform just as the President was about to deliver his address. There was an unseemly argument between President and intruder, which ended with Tilak turning to address the meeting himself. The audience refused to listen to him. Tilak in turn refused to leave the platform, despite the pleading of many eminent men. In the midst of the uproar the President began his speech. Tilak turned his back on him and started shouting. From the auditorium a heavy Deccan shoe came hurtling on to the platform and struck Surendranath Banerjea and Sir Pherozeshaha Mehta. This was followed by a general rush of Tilak's men, who advanced on the platform armed with chairs and sticks and laid about them wildly. The President and his Committee defended themselves with difficulty and had to appeal to the British police for protection. They were escorted out of the hall. Many arrests were made. And the entire session of Congress was suspended *sine die*.

7

These evidences of Hindu extremism thoroughly alarmed the Mohammedans. They knew Tilak's attitude; he had stirred up enough trouble between the two communities in Bombay. They knew too the aspirations of Congress for parliamentary government in India, an aspiration that seemed likely of early realisation with the Liberals in office in England. They were well aware how that would react on their own status. Once the proud ruling race in India, they saw themselves being swamped by Hindu majorities at every election; for there are at least three Hindus for every Mohammedan in India. They also dreaded the rioting and bloodshed that they knew would result from a meeting of the two communities at the same polling booth.

So in self-defence they formed the Muslim League in

1906 and exacted from the Viceroy (Lord Minto) the promise that when further concessions were made to India, Mohammedan interests would at least be safeguarded.

The English had no intention of punishing the entire country for the criminality of a few terrorists. So while repressive measures were applied to check anarchy, there was also a most liberal ladling of political concessions by John Morley in 1909. The baby was to be fed vigorously at one end while it was spanked at the other.

Indians were now for the first time given a place in the Executive Council of the Viceroy. Also for the first time they were appointed to the Council of India, which is the advisory board of the Secretary of State in London. The local councils were doubled. The official majority vanished save in the central legislature. The elective principle was widened, with, inevitably, protection for the Mohammedans and other minority interests. They were granted separate electorates.

The constituencies were necessarily small. The bulk of the peoples were illiterate. They knew nothing of politics. They were unable to vote. The largest constituency contained only 650 voters.

"I wonder," declared Lord Curzon in the House of Lords, "how these changes will, in the last resort, affect the great mass of the people of India—the people who have no vote and who have scarcely a voice. Remember that to these people, who form the bulk of the population of India, representative government and electoral institutions are nothing whatever. . . . The good government which appeals to them is the government which protects them from the rapacious moneylender and landlord, from the local *vakil* (attorney), and all the other sharks in human disguise which prey upon these unhappy people. I have the misgiving that this class will not fare better under these changes than they do now. At any rate, I see no place for them in these enlarged councils which are to be created,

and I am under the strong opinion that as government in India becomes more and more parliamentary—as will be the inevitable result—so it will become less paternal and less beneficent to the poorer classes of the population.”

But Congress was delighted. Here was the reward of their loyalty and moderation; still a further instalment in fulfilment of Britain's promise to associate Indians ever more closely with the governance of the country.

But the extremists viewed all concessions with contempt. They despised Congress's attitude of “mendicancy.” They continued their terrorisation with bomb and pistol. Indian police officers were shot dead in the streets. Witnesses were murdered. Bombs were flung into trains. Dacoities went on. In London a young Indian assassinated Sir William Curzon-Wylie, who was attached to the India Office. In Bombay Presidency the District Magistrate of Nasik, Mr. Jackson, was shot dead in a theatre.

The Government was driven to sterner action. Leaders of rebellion were deported. Tilak had already been arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment. The most virulent of the newspapers were suppressed. A Seditious Meetings Act was passed in 1911 to control the platform. At the other end the baby was fed with this welcome morsel—the cementing of Bengal's partition. The split province was unified. The capital was transferred from Calcutta, which was new and British, to ancient Delhi.

The cause of the intense agitation was removed. But it had not the slightest effect on the terrorists. There was an attempt on the life of the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge) as he rode on an elephant to the state opening of Delhi.

8

Then came the Great War.

It is generally believed that the War stilled all agitation in India, that anarchy stayed its hand.

But the exact reverse is the truth. Encouraged by the

distraction of Britain, terrorism took on an intensified form. All the forces of sedition combined in a protracted endeavour to overthrow British rule.

Of course one must not lose sight of the fact that India sent over a million men to the various fronts. More than half of these were actual combatants; the rest labour battalions. As many as 50,000 Indians were killed or died of wounds. India's monetary contribution reached the attractive total of £113,000,000. A number of princes went on service at the head of their own forces. The response was superb. Indians generally felt (as Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis so eloquently expressed it) that "our very existence depends upon the continuation of British rule. We cannot be mere spectators." Others, like that hardened political campaigner, Surendranath Banerjea, welcomed the opportunity of showing that the peoples were fitted for "Colonial self-government" by emulating the example of the other colonies.

That was India's loyal response. But below the surface the anarchists worked in league with the enemies of the State. The Germans kept them supplied with money and arms to bring about the overthrow of Britain in India.

The various centres that had been established in London, Paris, San Francisco and elsewhere got busy instantly. From the Zurich office, which was known as the International Pro-India Committee, the President, a young Tamil called Pillai, dashed to Berlin. There, under the patronage of the German Foreign Office, he established the "Indian National Party," which took orders from the German General Staff. Their aim was to cause disaffection among the Indian troops fighting on the Western Front.

Meanwhile from San Francisco the Indian revolutionaries spread right across the vast American continent. Fresh centres were established in Oregon and Washington. Constant touch was maintained with Germany, which supplied liaison officers, generally Indians. It was their

aim to start a revolution in India. Several ships were chartered to run arms to India, as well as large supplies of bullion to finance the revolution.

In India itself the waiting conspirators set up the nucleus of a training camp in a remote part of the jungle. It was their plan as soon as the German ships arrived to hold up the three main railways into Bengal by blowing up the principal bridges ; then to collect their forces and march on Calcutta, take possession of all arsenals, seize Fort William, and finally sack Calcutta, as Suraj-ud-Dowlah's men had sacked it just before the Black Hole.

Early in 1915 the *Annie Larsen*, a schooner, sailed from San Diego with 30,000 rifles and 12,000,000 rounds of ammunition purchased by a German in New York. She was told to make for the Island of Socorro, which lies six hundred miles off Mexico. Here she would be met by the *Maverick*, an old oil-tanker, purchased from the Standard Oil Company. The master of the *Maverick* had been instructed to stow the rifles in one of the empty oil-tanks and flood them with oil, stow the ammunition in another tank, and in case of urgent necessity sink the ship.

The *Maverick* waited for weeks. There was no sign of the *Annie Larsen*. She sailed at last empty for Java. The *Annie Larsen* meanwhile contrived to get to Hoquiam in Washington, where her cargo was immediately seized by the United States authorities, though America was not yet at war with Germany. The German Ambassador at Washington, Count Bernsdorf, protested vigorously. The cargo belonged to Germany, he insisted ; but the American Government refused to surrender it.

On the failure of this expedition another vessel, the *Henry S*, was sent to India from Manila. She carried a large cargo of arms and ammunition, but when she called at Shanghai the vigilant customs officials there made her haul out the entire load.

But Germany instantly evolved further plans. She

decided to equip three more ships. One was to carry 20,000 rifles, 8,000,000 cartridges, 2000 pistols, also hand-grenades, explosives and two lakhs of rupees direct from Shanghai to India. Another was to pick up her cargo at sea. The third vessel was to raid the convict settlement in the Andamans, rescue the anarchists who had been deported from India, and make for Rangoon.

But every one of these plots was frustrated.

The Germans also planned to invade Burma from Siam, win over the military police there and proceed to the conquest of India. Their agents got busy too on the North-West Frontier of India, where the population is almost entirely Mohammedan. During the War Moslem loyalty was put to a severe strain. Turkey happened to be one of Britain's enemies, and her Sultan was venerated by Moslems as Caliph, the heir of the Prophet.

Through Persia and Afghanistan, both Moslem countries, Germany strove to stir up the frontier Moslems, but the Amir of Afghanistan's uncompromising attitude towards these intriguers was mainly responsible for the failure of this design.

There was some trouble, however, in the Punjab, caused entirely by emigrant Sikhs repatriated from America. They had returned contaminated with the mutinous doctrines of the Ghadr party in San Francisco. It was their resolve to stir up a fresh mutiny in India. But the Government acted promptly and India was spared the agony of revolution.

9

Not even the more prudent of India's agitators abated their clamour during those troubled war years. The chorus was swelled by many new voices, among them Mrs. Annie Besant's. This small, white-haired old lady had been in India since 1893. Of mixed English and Irish stock, she married in her teens a younger brother of Sir Walter Besant, was unhappy during her honeymoon and

finally left her husband. She later became a disciple of Charles Bradlaugh, once a Sunday School teacher, but now an atheist. She left for India after Bradlaugh's death and took control of the Theosophist movement. "My work in the sphere of politics," she declared, "is over. I shall never resume it." None the less the war had not been on long when she emerged from this retirement. The change in attitude was actuated by a private grievance against the Government. She felt that in the altered circumstances there was hope of uniting Hindu with Moslem. There was uneasiness over the Caliph. The Muslim League allowed itself to be persuaded by Mrs. Besant and joined forces with Congress. The clamour grew. The embarrassment of the Indian Government, already acute because of German intrigues with Indian terrorists, finally expressed itself in the arrest of Mrs. Besant. Congress promptly retaliated by appointing her President of the next session of Congress—and a benign but misguided Government released her in ample time to assume this office.

Another figure that emerged during those dark years was Gandhi. He sprang from a stock of well-to-do Hindu traders who had scrambled to eminence by dabbling in politics. For three generations the family had supplied Prime Ministers to little States on the Western coast. As a child Gandhi was shy and tearfully sensitive. He was thrice betrothed before he was six, married when only thirteen, and entered at once into such sexual over-indulgence that his mind became a prey to fears; he howled and cried if left alone in the dark and once even attempted suicide.

He indulged in much moral errantry during those early years. He ate meat. He smoked. He stole money from his servants. On five occasions he visited brothels, hopefully yet curbed by timidity, as he confesses naïvely in his autobiography.

It was not until his visit to England that a change came

over him. Somehow he seemed to feel that in London he would be transformed by a fairy wand into an English gentleman. He tricked himself out in dress clothes from Bond Street and a silk hat which he stroked ecstatically but ruinously the wrong way ; learned, with difficulty, to part his hair in the middle ; and joined a dancing class so that he might prance more rhythmically with the beauteous blondes in the boarding-house. His aspirations even soared to music. He bought a violin and attacked the strings with vigour but without melody. He took lessons in elocution. He wore collars nearly four inches high, and cut off the sacred tuft of hair that all Hindus grow on the crown of the head. He would gladly have changed his colour if he could, for his sensitiveness was repeatedly stung by the attention he attracted. He sighed to seem no different from the tall, elegant, bespatted and begloved forms that decorated the Royal enclosure at Ascot. At length, with a sad heart, he abandoned the endeavour. He sold his violin, to the relief (he confesses) of his teacher. He even began to confide to the young women he sometimes escorted that though not yet twenty he was both married and a parent.

He returned to India as a barrister and not long afterwards allowed himself to be dragged by his brother into a quarrel with the British authorities. The brother, in politics like the rest of the Gandhis, had indulged in some intrigue which earned him the rebuke of the British agent. Gandhi went to interview this official, insisted on staying after the conversation had ended, and had eventually to be shown out. He threatened all manner of reprisals, including a summons for assault ; but realising that he was really in the wrong, he swallowed his humiliation and learnt a valuable lesson in strategy. Personal grievances, he saw, are petty and inconsequential ; only intervention in a popular cause can translate one into a national hero.

Gandhi left for South Africa a few months later. Here he found many restrictive measures passed against the coloured races by the early white settlers. No coloured man was, for instance, allowed out after dark in Durban. Designed initially to safeguard white women from Zulus, it was unhesitatingly relaxed in favour of Indians. Gandhi himself was equipped with a permanent pass to stay out as long as he pleased. But he preferred to go out of his way to win martyrdom. He insisted on travelling first-class in the trains so as to challenge the regulations of the railway. He would not remove his headgear in court, but strode out in protest at this fresh "insult to India." In Pretoria, where men of colour were not allowed to walk on certain sides of the street, he was pushed off the pavement by a Boer policeman. This had nothing whatsoever to do with the English, but it provided Gandhi with his opportunity and a career. He assembled his countrymen in meetings of protest and lashed them into a frenzy.

At that time there were in South Africa thousands of indentured coolies working in the mines. They were all Indians. Gandhi had ambitions of swelling his army of agitators with this mighty number, but realised that the abolition of indenture would prove too formidable a goal to attain in one leap. He sought a more accessible objective. He found it in the tax of £3 levied from each coolie at the end of his term of indenture, failing which a new term of indenture was imposed. There had already been some agitation against this levy, but Gandhi was to conduct it more skilfully and more profitably than the rest.

His campaign was interrupted by the South African War and, a little later, by the Zulu rebellion. In both these emergencies, in the face of stern criticism from his followers, who were far more restricted in their mental processes, Gandhi placed himself at the service of the Government. His action may have been inspired by the utmost sincerity, but Gandhi admits he derived from

the military training many useful lessons in the handling of vast numbers of men.

It was in September 1913 that his hour came. The coolies had already been lured into his fold by months of ceaseless campaigning and promises of a new Canaan. There were still the women to be won over, a most important factor in any political manoeuvre. Being a lawyer, Gandhi had the skill and opportunity to unearth a South African ruling that required all marriages, save those in Christian churches, to be registered. This provided him with a magical lever. Indians had been married in South Africa for two generations without troubling to go to the Registrar. That the legality of these unions had not yet been questioned did not concern him. The fact remained that the women had been reduced to the status of concubines and the children to bastards. What an opportunity for rousing the people ! Every man was flushed at the slur cast upon himself and his mother. All the women grew excited. Gandhi, educated in an Inn of Court in England, must have known that the ruling obtains in almost every Christian country. But he had no wish to go into that. Nor had he any intention of appealing to the courts for a revision. That would have been tactically a blunder. If the courts yielded a golden opportunity would have been flung aside. The women were awakening to political consciousness. If he could now persuade them to defy some trifling law, then all India would be aflame at the news of their arrest.

Ten or eleven women of his own circle were induced to go out and court arrest by hawking goods without a licence. But the Government refused to fall into the trap. The women were allowed to hawk goods. They crossed forbidden frontiers and were ignored. It looked as if Gandhi's precious scheme would come to nothing. But his Napoleonic brain was undaunted. There were the indentured labourers in the mines ! If they could be

induced to strike ! Or better still, if the women could induce them to strike. He saw the flaming news spreading throughout India. " Police lay brutal hands even on your women." What a golden way out of his dilemma ! And the Government, who had avoided so many pitfalls, fell into this. The women were arrested. India was roused.

Eventually Gandhi got what he wanted. The Viceroy of India voiced India's plea. The South African tax on Indian labourers was abolished.

IO

Gandhi returned to India a hero. He had an additional claim to India's adulation. For some years he had been engaged in the acquisition of saintliness. There is no doubt that in his religious fervour Gandhi was sincere. He had since his early youth been interested in comparative religions. He evolved eventually a simple, austere faith, which necessitated a life of poverty. His idealism and his austerities won the plaudits of India's diversified millions, who had in common only the ability to appraise a life of simple saintliness. To Moslem as to Hindu, to Sikh as to Untouchable, here was a mystic philosopher scaling the lofty altitudes of divinity. Gandhi became a figure of worship. He was crowned with the title of *Mahatma*—" The Saint."

He returned to India not long after the outbreak of the Great War. He begged to be allowed to recruit men for the British Army. From every recruiting platform he denounced the British for their " blackest misdeeds." He also went about looking for grievances over which to agitate. And was allowed to. But he found none big enough to rouse all India.

With the end of the war came the need for continuing certain measures of the Defence of India Act, since the ordinary law had been unequal to the extensive revolutionary

organisations that persisted. The saner leaders of Indian thought, the most earnest of political crusaders had always hitherto been on the side of law and order. They condemned assassination. They were eager that terrorism should be stamped out. But Gandhi, who had sought in vain for a battle cry, ranged himself against the Government on this issue. The Rowlatt Act, which was to continue the emergency measures against the forces of anarchy, was denounced by him in press and from platform. He brushed aside the appalling memories of the past, when terrorism had in Bengal alone perpetrated no fewer than 311 outrages for which ultimately only 34 persons were brought to book. He was not concerned with facts. He wanted an excuse; and this seemed Heaven-sent.

To the masses, of course, the details of the Rowlatt Act could convey nothing; so unscrupulous disciples of Gandhi distorted and manipulated them as they chose. It was said, with calculated malice, that a father may not talk to his own son at a street corner without being dragged off to gaol by the police. The simple villagers were told that they could never celebrate a wedding again, since that would be regarded by the "Satanic Government" as an illegal assembly for the purposes of conspiracy.

Little was done by the Government to prevent the spread of this false propaganda. After the country had been carefully prepared, Gandhi launched his campaign of passive resistance. He proclaimed a *hartal*—a day of public mourning when all shops should be closed and all business suspended. As a whole the public was indifferent, but they were coerced and intimidated into observing it. There were acts of violence everywhere against the reluctant.

Three days later Gandhi attempted to enter the Punjab against the orders of the Punjab Government. He was stopped on the border and sent back to Bombay. But somehow the rumour was spread that he had been arrested.

All Punjab was soon in an uproar. Serious riots occurred in Lahore, Amritsar and elsewhere. Europeans were murdered. Railway stations were attacked. Railway lines were torn up, bridges destroyed, and telegraph wires cut. Banks and post-offices were raided. The situation got so acute that General Dyer was sent with a body of troops to restore order.

He acted promptly and with severity. In defiance of his orders a crowd of 5000 assembled at Jallianwala Bagh on the 13th of April, 1919. The General marched against them with a small band of fifty Indian infantrymen. He opened fire on the mob, killing 379 persons and injuring many more. Judged in the calm light of to-day his action seems unnecessarily brutal; but it should be remembered that all Punjab was in rebellion; that across the frontier the friendly Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan had been murdered and that the new ruler was resolved on marching on India with his entire army, which he actually did a few weeks later; that the Great Mutiny of 1857 had sprung from even smaller beginnings and could have been checked had greater vigour been exercised in its early stages. One thing at least is clear: General Dyer's severity had the desired effect. Within a week there was peace throughout the Punjab. Order was restored. The crisis had been passed. All India was again calm.

Gandhi's campaign of passive resistance had led merely to violence and bloodshed. But that did not deter him from turning it promptly to his advantage. He was concerned not so much with the initial violence of the men he had stirred to action, but with the measures that had been taken to quell them. Dyer became a monster and his victims martyrs.

To all in India Gandhi now offered the choice of ranging themselves on one side or the other, with those who had shed their blood for the country or——. The appeal was charged with emotion. The issue was inescapable. Among

others Moti Lal Nehru and C. R. Das threw up their extensive practices at the Bar and became extremists—anti-British to the last ditch.

II

Meanwhile the process of feeding the baby at the unspanked end proceeded, with the quixotic Secretary of State, Edwin Samuel Montagu, in the fantastic rôle of nurse. He toured India personally to gauge how much of each ingredient should be blended in the new diet. What he found was unexpected. He beheld, as he has himself described it, a "pathetic contentment of the masses." And he decided on "deliberately disturbing it." Had he decided merely on further political privileges it would have been but a continuation of the policy that had been pursued for a century by the British. But that did not seem enough to Mr. Montagu. He offered now the definite goal of self-government, though only five years before, the Secretary of State, Lord Crewe, himself a Liberal, had said that one must look in vain to a status in India in any way comparable with Dominion self-government. "There is nothing whatever in the teachings of history," he said, "so far as I know them, which makes the realisation of such a dream even remotely probable."

Montagu's promise was scoffed at by the very people whom it was intended to appease. Congress, now captured entirely by the extremists, declared that Montagu's concessions meant for India "perpetual slavery which can only be broken by a revolution." Leaflets were distributed even before his arrival stating: "Our duty is plain. We have no concern in Mr. Montagu's coming or going. . . . But first and last spread terror. Make this unholy Government impossible. Hide like invisible shadows of gloom and rain death upon the alien bureaucracy."

Hurrying home with his illuminated addresses and his

garlands Montagu evolved a new mode of government known as Dyarchy. This was put into effect in the provinces. Certain departments were entrusted to the care of Ministers chosen, as members of the English Cabinet are, from the legislature. The more important offices, such as finance and defence, remained in the care of the Governor and his small executive Council, on which since 1910 Indians had been included.

In the central government there was no Dyarchy. But a second chamber was constituted, known as the Council of State. Of the sixty members of this thirty-three are elected, the rest nominated by the Government. They represent learning, rank, and experience in public affairs. The lower chamber, the Legislative Assembly, is, however, the more important. It has 146 members, more than a hundred of whom are elected. A Chamber of Princes was also created in which, for the first time in the history of India, the ruling chiefs were brought together, to work with instead of against each other. They represent nearly a half of that vast continent and have a right to be consulted on issues that affect India as a whole.

The wild men of Congress refused to accept or to participate in any of these changes. They boycotted the elections for some years and then, adjusting their tactics, invaded the legislatures with the sole purpose of causing obstruction.

But non-co-operation with these reforms was not enough for Gandhi even in those early days. He declared war on the Government. He called for a boycott of all Government service, both civil and military, a withdrawal from all Government schools and colleges, and a refusal to pay taxes. At intervals *hartals* were declared, when (again by coercion and intimidation) shops were closed and business suspended. He urged a boycott of British trade, ordered a bonfire of all British goods, and picketed shops in the bazaars to see that his orders were not evaded.

Public feeling was soon inflamed. In Southern India Moslem fanaticism led to the Moplah revolt which vented itself essentially on the Hindu population, who were forcibly circumcised and made the victims of savage atrocities. Thousands were skinned alive. Later that year Gandhi's campaign against the Prince of Wales's visit led to severe rioting in Bombay on the day of His Royal Highness's arrival.

Gandhi merely beat his breast and fasted ; but went on with his work of stirring up the simple villagers. There was a gruesome outcome to his preaching in Chauri Chaura where a mob murdered and burnt twenty-one policemen and watchmen. Again Gandhi put on the sack-cloth of repentance, but a forbearing Government had been driven beyond its endurance. Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment.

But he was detained for no more than two years.

He emerged a little bewildered. The old order had changed. There were new figures on the political horizon. Communism had, under Lenin's lead, begun to take a hand in Indian affairs. Trouble was being stirred up in the industrial districts. The Hindus and Moslems were again at each other's throats. Gandhi's was a voice in the wilderness until he took up the extreme cry of "complete independence," which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, an Indian Communist lately returned from Soviet Russia, had already raised.

Together they denounced the Simon Commission and refused to co-operate with it. The offer of Dominion status, which was precisely what Congress had been demanding, was rejected with scorn. The Christmas of 1929 found Congress assembled at Lahore. The youthful President, Jawaharlal Nehru, rode through the city in state, mounted on a white horse and escorted by a herd of elephants. The band played "The Wearing of the Green." When Congress met there was a wild scene. Everyone

shouted, red flags were waved, and the President tried to produce order by crying "Shut up! Shut up!" at intervals. *The Times* report of the meeting states: "It is true that the proceedings in the tent began with women and volunteers singing *Bande Mataram* in what the reporter graphically calls 'pin-drop silence,' but the pin-drop silence was rudely shattered when members of the Kirti Kisan Sabha, which is a society composed of labourers, artisans and peasants, rushed the doors, refusing to pay entrance money. They firmly took the best seats, which had been reserved for good Congressmen who had paid for season tickets, which cost as much as fifty rupees. A sharp fight with the volunteers followed, *lathis* (sticks) being freely used, and there were casualties on both sides. Apparently the Kirti Kisan Sabha won the day, as this morning the Committee made a generous gesture and decided to allow them on the free list at future sessions."¹

Yet amid this pandemonium, heightened by arguments between deputies and the President, by men walking out to form parties of their own, by shouting here and fierce excitement there, resolutions were passed acclaiming terrorism, denouncing the Round Table Conference, declaring India a Republic, and repudiating the national debt.

None the less three Round Table Conferences have been held. The first the Congress boycotted. To the second, also held in London, they sent Gandhi, who might just as well have stayed away, for he was disposed neither to discuss the issues nor to compromise with the many interests involved. He came merely to demand. Against him were ranged the Princes of India, not in the least disposed to bow their heads to a horde of howling politicians. They had treaty rights with the King of England, who is represented in India by the Viceroy. With an Indian democracy they refused absolutely to have any

¹ *The Times*, December 31, 1929.

truck. The Moslems, in their turn, insisted on safeguards. If the demands of Congress (which was essentially Hindu) were conceded, Moslem interests would suffer. There were others of a like mind. All the minorities were arrayed against the Hindus of Congress, and the minorities added together constituted a majority.

Meanwhile the irreconcilables renewed their terrorist activities in India. English magistrates were murdered. Police officers were shot down. Bombs were thrown into the Legislative Assembly. An attempt was made to blow up the Viceroy's train. Loyal Indians were intimidated. The lives of their wives and children were threatened. No recourse was left to the British but to suppress such disorder with a firm hand. Gandhi was again arrested. All the leaders of anarchy were lodged in prison. And once more the country found peace and security.

12

Two Round Table Conferences having failed to agree on a new constitution for India, the British Prime Minister undertook the task himself, and a third Round Table Conference was called at the end of 1932 to discuss it.

At the same time a vast extension was planned in the franchise. Votes are to be granted to 30,000,000 more Indians, the bulk of whom are illiterate and can only distinguish one candidate from another by some pictorial sign. Indeed this has been the procedure at the booths ever since Mr. Montagu's concessions. Candidates cease to be individuals and become bicycles, umbrellas, a sword, a tiger, or a hand. On these the simple and bewildered villagers vote.

By no stretch of the imagination can it be maintained that it is the British who stand in the way of India's attainment of independence. The diversified millions bear self-forged fetters upon their hands and feet. Let us now proceed to examine them.

PART II
FETTERS

CHAPTER VI

YE GODS

I

RELIGION is the greatest man-devised boon conferred on the human race. Confronted by the eternal mystery of life and death, tortured by the void of the hereafter, terrorised by the unconquerable phenomena of storm and flood and fire, haunted by ungratified desires, man has followed eagerly the inspired and the humbug alike, along every path that offered a comforting solution to his bewilderment.

Who can decide definitely this side of Heaven which of the million gods worshipped since the birth of time by this earth's scattered peoples—gods for whom uncountable legions have readily suffered martyrdom—are the rightful arbiters of our destiny and which the true religion?

Each has soothed fears with a dexterous right hand, offered hope, a glimpse of happiness, if not here, then in the hereafter. Each has evolved a code of right living: though inevitably, through the centuries, each has become overladen with the petty devices of priests, evolved chiefly to strengthen and perpetuate priestly authority, and with other accretions intended to aid kings, conquerors, or the state in general. All of which accretions have become new sins, or, less impressively, merely superstitions.

With the advance of civilisation and the to-and-fro of commerce the religions borrowed much from each other. But essentially they all had a great deal in common. The worship of the sun. The sanctity of mother earth, often represented with an infant in arms. And after the startling discovery of man's paternal rôle (for at one time all believed in virgin birth) came the adoration of the male organ of generation, which has been accorded a place of glory in almost every house of worship—in Egypt, in Babylonia, and especially in India.

There have been many absurdities in the religions of

even the most intelligent peoples. The cultured Greeks, for instance, had a god who was a fly-catcher ; no doubt a serviceable deity on a pest-ridden Mediterranean shore. Also in their pantheon were gods capable of fraud, bribery, adultery, incest and murder. Yet, with all its inconsistencies and shortcomings, religion has fulfilled a useful purpose, not only for the populace, but for the more favoured who, by slaughter or intrigue, found themselves in authority. Religion has contrived to keep the multitude quiet. It has made them endure their sufferings patiently.

In India it has fulfilled not only both these primary functions, but it has been for three thousand years, as it remains to-day, a fetter on progress—the most formidable of all India's fetters. And when one speaks of religion in India, one thinks essentially of Hinduism, which is not only the oldest religion in the country,¹ but the faith of over two hundred and forty millions of the peoples. The only other religion in India with any considerable following is Mohammedanism, which by introducing a racio-religious conflict has imposed a fresh fetter, hindering both peace and amicability.

2

Hinduism has evolved from a primitive nature worship. Even in its earliest form it had a triune god. The Hindus still speak, though a little vaguely, of a triple divinity, of whom the chief is Brahma, a god who in senility has been completely displaced by his junior partners—Shiva and Vishnu. Around these two the serried ranks of the Hindu community group themselves, Shiva having by far the greater following and receiving homage from even the strictest of Vishnu's devotees.

As a god Shiva is rather a disreputable figure. He is himself a thief, a robber and a deceiver ; and his passion

¹ See Appendix B.

for blood seems insatiable. At one time every rascal and murderer committed his vilest crimes with Shiva's presumed benediction, but this favour in the hurly-burly of modernity has been transferred to his devoted and equally divine spouse Kali, to whose shrine the Thugs brought their gruesome offerings after every strangulation.

But Shiva has a dual function: besides being the Destroyer he is also the Life-giver. In the one rôle he is fierce, with a cruel third eye, a serpent about his throat and a necklet of large skulls. But it is not thus that he is worshipped. In his temples he is represented by a symbol—the symbol of life—which is a model of the male organ of generation, glorified and exalted. There are thirty million such Shiva symbols or lingams up and down India, worshipped by men and women with water offerings and marigolds. In many instances the yoni, or female organ of generation, is associated with this Shivite symbol so that one may bow before the life-force conjured by the sex act. The pious have lingams branded on their breasts and arms; or wear them in little silver amulets.

Shiva is also a sort of Bacchus, the god of self-indulgence and sensual gratification. His worship is sometimes associated with orgies of drunkenness, and his elfin attendants are represented in varying states of inebriated ecstasy or in the comatose limpness that follows other excesses.

Vishnu, on the other hand, is the Preserver—the god who offers hope, endurance and the grace of immortality. He was born into the world to suffer for the people and with the people, not once but many times, the most notable of his incarnations being as Krishna, a word which bears an extraordinary similarity to Christ. He came also as Rama in another of the dim pre-Christian æons celebrated in that sanctified epic, the Ramayana. In its essentials Vishnuism possesses the loftiest ideals and the noblest code of life to be found in the gallery of religions; for it

has been the reservoir from which most of the others have been drawn, and has in turn replenished its ideology by appropriating from time to time the best available elsewhere. But to unlettered millions the noblest philosophy can never serve as a religion. Abstractions fail to guide and inspire as can individual gods, represented by images, attended by ceremonial, worshipped with sacrifice, and made awesome by rigid inhibitions. These rites have so encrusted Hinduism in all its forms that they fill the waking day, making it impossible for the mind to elude the god. So completely have they overshadowed its philosophy that even the most cultured men and women in India observe the crudest dictates of their religion.

Vishnu is more lovable than Shiva. He was a man—many men, when viewed in his varied incarnations. He is kindly, gentle, self-sacrificing, eager to assist others, tender towards the meanest animals, and, since he also has man's weaknesses, perhaps a little over-indulgent in sex, having had, as Krishna, no fewer than 16,000 wives who bore him 108,000 sons. It is, unhappily, this aspect of his life that receives most prominence. In his temples there are sensuous representations of his amorousness that it would be impossible to describe in detail, involving not only fornication in the most assorted attitudes, but even homosexuality. Some of the Vishnu sects have converted such practices into a ritual of worship. The Vallabhas, for instance, regard each priest as Krishna himself. They believe that by indulging in sexual intercourse with the god through his priest, all sins of the body and mind will be washed away. Women, eager for salvation, cast aside modesty and dignity; even the wives of the highest officials of State surrender themselves to the sexual caresses of the priests. Male members of the sect, anxious not to lose divine favour, have been known to wear long hair and dress like women.

Their prayer meetings are held in the strictest secrecy.

Lessons are read from the scriptures of the sexual diversions of the god ; these serve to excite and inflame the passions of the congregation. Sexual dalliance is described as the highest bliss here ; it is held out as the principal diversion in the hereafter. Even those not members of the sect are for a fee allowed by the priests to witness their amorous performances.

Another secret cult is that of the Saktis, who indulge in yoni worship. To them every female is a divinity. Their sacred pictures are feminine nudes, and their ritual merely a sexual orgy. This vast religious fraternity has two distinct tenets : to indulge the natural appetites by eating, drinking and sexual exercise ; and to acquire supernatural faculties. At their prayer meetings the worshippers sit on the floor in a circle, men and women together. For the moment caste is forgotten completely. In the centre stands a naked woman, and the adoration of the yoni is indulged in most realistically. Then, although wine and meat are generally forbidden to the Hindu, both wine and meat are served, in order to stimulate the congregation for what is to follow. The final act is a quite promiscuous sexual indulgence, the men regarding themselves as the god Shiva, and the women as his wife. It is god and goddess and not they who behave so, they affirm. The nearest relatives have sometimes been known to cohabit in this manner without diffidence or disgust. No Hindu ever acknowledges to being a Sakta. He is either Shivaite or Vishnuite to the world ; but in secret Brahmins, and even members of the nobility, indulge in this rite.

It should be remembered that though these aspects of divinity may seem crude, grotesque, or even abominable to the Western world, to the Indians in their simple fervour their weird gods bring that solace, encouragement, deliverance and hope for which every heart craves in the hour of distress. To them, as to the followers of every creed, the divinity is both an inspiration and a refuge. When

all material aids fail, there remains only the supernatural straw, which, like the joker in a pack of cards, assumes any value you please. Kali may seem terrifying with her long bloodstained tongue, her fierce eyes and her brandished knives ; but beneath those sagging breasts she has the heart of a mother ready to receive the distressed head of every child wanting to weep out its woe.

Consider this touching note from a little Hindu girl about to commit suicide. She is unwed, though past the age of marriage. She feels the humiliation acutely. It is a humiliation not only of herself, but of her parents ; for a curse has been laid by the priests upon every house in which a girl remains unwed after puberty.¹ In her farewell note to her father, she says :

“ Last night I dreamt a dream, father, which made me take my vow. To the enthralling strains of a music unheard before, and amid a blaze of light . . . I saw the Divine Mother Durga,² with benignant smile, beckoning me to the abode of the blest up above, and then I thought of you, father, and of the ever sorrow-laden face of my beloved mother, and of the dear little ones who have done so much to brighten our home. And then I resolved to save you all, and made a sign to the Divine Mother that I would not delay obeying her merciful call. . . . And now, dear father, farewell. . . . A strange and sweet sensation overpowers me. Up above in my new home, at the lotus feet of the Divine Mother, and lying within the light of uncreated rays, as I used to lie upon your loving breast, I have only to wait a little while till you and mother come ! ”

3

Throughout its long history Hinduism has been engaged not so much in combating as in absorbing every conflicting faith and creed. In consequence there are within its folds

¹ See Chapter VII.

² Kali.

to-day more creeds than may be found scattered through the rest of the world. Every little village has its local array of divinities. In the temples the devout may be seen, some worshipping trees, others worshipping serpents, but all calling themselves Hindus. This elasticity conferred upon Hinduism by Vishnu's considerate reincarnations, enabled the priests to augment the hierarchy by proclaiming the fish god to be Vishnu, as also the boar. Even when Siddhartha Gautama, known to us as the Buddha, strove to purge the religion of its evils, Hinduism briskly swallowed the entire Buddhist sect by declaring the Buddha to be but Vishnu again in a fresh manifestation. So Buddhism was absorbed in India. Only beyond the frontiers, in Ceylon, in Burma, and Tibet, does it maintain an independent existence.

It was, of course, a deft move on the part of the priests, or Brahmins, to endow Hinduism with this nimble acquisitiveness. Their sway has been extended, their scope widened; and doubtless no priesthood possesses such a close grip upon the consciences of the people. From the accouchement to the funeral pyre they order every hour of every day in every Hindu life. They dictate what a Hindu should eat and drink, whom he should marry, what children he should have, what penances he should undergo. They are in constant attendance; in the richer households there are resident priests. So extraordinary indeed is the power the Brahmins have acquired through the centuries that they have constituted themselves a sanctified body of supermen. No earthly qualification can entitle one to enter their ranks. Nothing but the divine decree of birth can make a man a priest. It is an honour not without profit. The rewards are so abundant that the Brahmins lost no time in converting the office into a family preserve, to be handed down from father to sons. By this right of birth alone, without any other qualification, the Brahmins fulfil their pious duties.

The vast majority of Brahmins, indeed, are ignorant of their own scriptures.

In addition to its priests, who number twenty million, Hinduism is burdened with a rigid caste system, unparalleled in the entire history of the world. It is a grading of humanity by birth, the Brahmins, of course, enjoying pride of place. Next in importance are the old military caste ; after them the merchants ; and then the peasants. That is but the framework of demarcation. Actually each of these grades is so heavily subdivided that there are no fewer than two thousand mutually exclusive castes, not one member of which can marry into another, and most of whom cannot sit down together to dinner.

Outside this intricate caste pale is the vast body of Untouchables, numbering no fewer than sixty million people, all still meekly regarding themselves as Hindus, though never permitted to approach within easy distance of their priests or temples. Like the lepers of Judea, they have to herald their approach with the cry of "Unclean ! Unclean !" When they go shopping they proclaim their requirements from a distance, place their money in a basket, and hurry out of polluting range. Not until then will the shopkeeper approach, the money, oddly enough, being immune from contamination. These outcasts have their own wells to which, under a blazing sun, they trudge across vast distances in order to quench their thirst. Some of them are regarded as so debased that they are ordered by their priests not to pollute the earth by lying upon it. They live in consequence like bats in the trees. Others still are subjected to the agonising ordeal of not excreting until after sundown, and since the flesh is weak, they plug themselves with clay, exposing it to the sun to harden. For hours some of these unhappy men and women suffer agonies, to which not infrequently they succumb. Condemned for at least thirty centuries to this degradation, they have had no career open to

them except the basest. They perform the duties of scavengers. In their ignorance they have developed abominable habits. Quite a large number of them have been forced to resort to crime. No Hindu pities them. Indeed, the attitude is one of the utmost contempt. For do not the sacred books proclaim that as a man has lived so shall he be reborn? These Untouchables have been lowly graded by the decree of the gods for sins committed in a former existence. "He that," it has been written, "to slake his lust lay hands on the wife of his friend, of his teacher, or of his king, is born after death as a swine. He will be five years a swine, ten years a porcupine, five years a cat, ten years a cock, three months an ant, one month an insect, and then, having had these embodiments, will be born in a worm's existence. In this worm's existence he will live fourteen months, and then, having atoned for his evil, be born again as a human being. For five offences, indeed, there is no atonement, through them a man becomes an outcast, unworthy of intercourse with forefathers, gods, and pious men, goes to hell, is roasted there like a fish, and has to live there on matter and blood. These are : the murder of a Brahmin, cow-slaying, intercourse with another's wife, unbelief, and living on a woman."¹

So the Untouchable is making his atonement for some heinous offence that happily was not one of the irredeemable five.

Nor can any pious Hindu be expected to flaunt the divine decree by extenuating in the smallest measure the Untouchable's agony. Indeed, he often augments the torture. If Untouchables aspire to educate their children they are set upon by hirelings and beaten, or hot lead is poured into their ears. There is no way out for them in this existence. If they submit meekly to their fate and

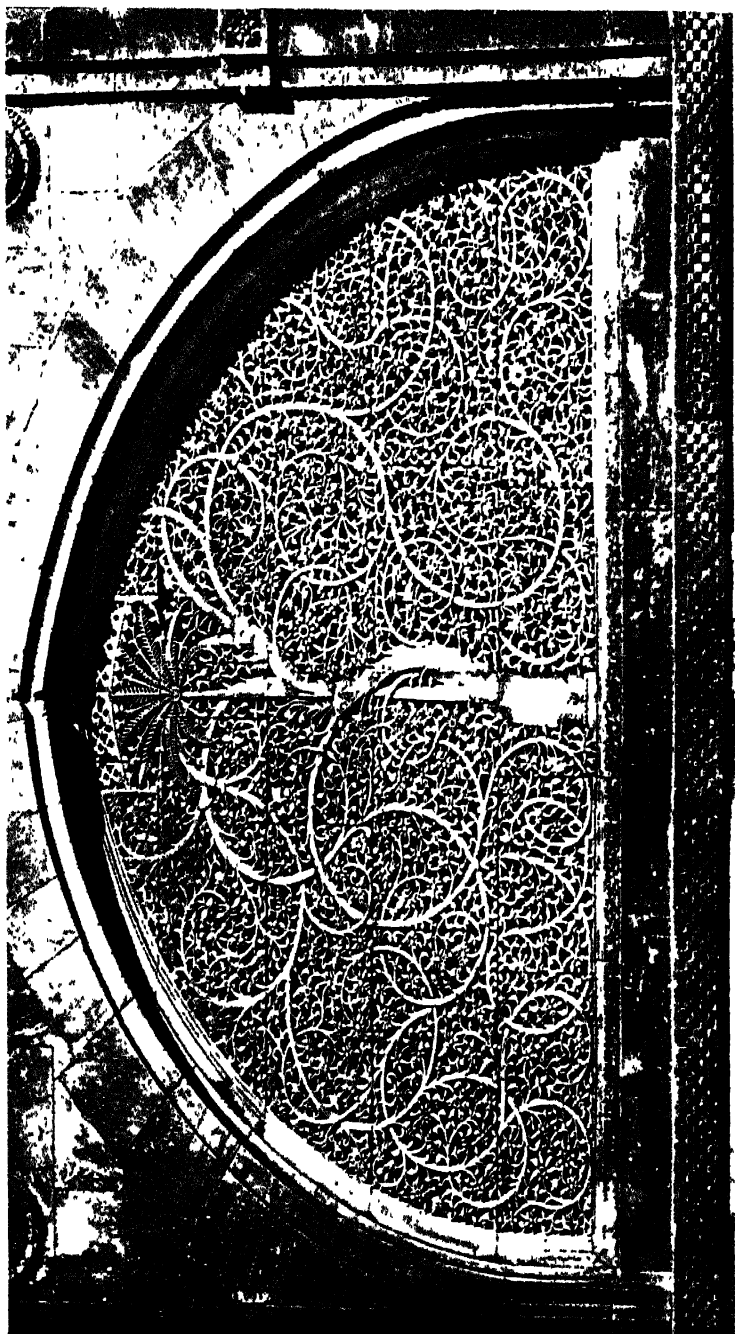
¹ Quoted in *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, by J. J. Meyer. (Routledge, 1930.)

conduct themselves with such piety as is permitted within their restricted scope, their one hope is that in their rebirth they will be more fortunately placed. A few have sought refuge in other faiths ; many millions were converted to Islam in the heyday of Moslem rule ; and now many are flocking to Christianity.

The British Government, in their resolve for equality, have afforded these downtrodden wretches an opportunity of education as well as of employment. Some have attained the highest offices of State. Many of the women—and among the Untouchables are the loveliest women in India—are now school-teachers or nurses. In their pitiful seclusion the Untouchables control themselves with their own caste systems. They, too, are graded in their range of pollution. Some pollute from a distance of two hundred yards. To be defiled by any of these pariahs would cause a better born Hindu himself to lose caste, which can be regained only by the performance of certain arduous and unpleasant ablutions, the recital of many tedious mantras, and the payment of a substantial sum to the priests. But on no account, no matter what he does or pays, can a man of lower caste be promoted. He must keep to the ancestral groove until the end of life. There is no liberation.

More than this : so that all should mark them and know who each is, religion requires that every Hindu face should be labelled with caste signs. The Shivaite has three horizontal lines streaked in ash or cow-dung. The Vishnuite a single perpendicular stroke, representing the divine footprint ; or a trident in white and scarlet. It is never possible to deceive the priests as to one's rightful caste. All antecedents are known of the residents, and there is a watch and ward committee to pry into the claims of every stranger and so preserve each caste from the contamination of an intruder.

But heaviest of the burdens imposed by religion is the



PERFORATED STONE WINDOW IN SIDDI SAYYID'S MOSQUE AT AHMEDABAD
Moslem architecture.

outlook of the Hindu, who is taught to regard life as an illusion. His soul alone counts, nothing else on this earth matters. Man is here merely to work out his salvation. So long as he renounces the world and treads the path of piety, he may regard with indifference and even contempt the intrigues and wars and slaughters that surround him. What matter if he should himself be a victim! His devotional fervour will win him from the gods a higher rung in the reincarnational ladder. Thus did the poor Indian, buffeted, robbed and tortured for more than four thousand years by the invading hosts, solace himself. The more troubles he had the more religious he became, and his piety made him less and less able to fight against his invaders and oppressors.

These solacing precepts undermined all ambition. The Hindu is consequently unprogressive and selfish. His own soul is his chief concern, not the material welfare of his neighbour, unless it happens that the service he can render is coupled in the scriptures with an appetising spiritual reward.

4

The road to salvation in Hinduism must be taken alone. Every Hindu who attempts this journey must abandon wife and children, completely indifferent to their fate, though of course the family system ensures that they will be provided for by the others in the household. He must give up his everyday clothes and walk out into the jungles with no more than a rag to cover his modesty, if he veils it at all. Away from human habitation, he must absorb himself in contemplation of the divinity. From being a man of cleanly habits, for the Hindu baths many times a day, he now neglects his person completely. His hair is allowed to grow untended and soon becomes both dirty and matted. His naked body is smeared from head to foot with mud and ashes. He goes for days without food

until the bones tear through his cheeks and the ribs through his sides. His eyes stare from his head like weird lights. He sits in wild detachment, unshielded from the sun, unsheltered from rain and storm, exposed to the bitterness of cold and the attack of savage beasts, against whom his only weapon is the iron tongs with which he tends his sacred fire.

These austerities are regarded not only as a mortification of those senses that clutch at the soul, but also, since the gods themselves pursued the same course, spiritual deposits in the bank of Heaven. No matter by whom practised such asceticism, self-mortification and contempt of worldliness are an infallible source of power. The ascetic acquires a sort of Aladdin's lamp with which he can perform wonders. An example of this is provided by the story of the Brahmin boy.

He was the only child of a very poor woman and lived on the sparse fare she was able to provide him on her scant earnings. One day, during a festival at which Brahmins are fed, the boy was given a hearty meal of rice cooked in milk and sweetened with sugar. This so delighted his palate, that the cake of coarse brown bread baked by his mother proved nauseating next morning. He resolutely refused it. Nothing but milk and rice and sugar would he have, no matter how much his mother pleaded.

"Well," she said at last, "this is all I can give you. If you want those delicacies, you will have to ask the good goddess Devi for them."

Not far from their hovel was a little temple of Devi. To this the Brahmin boy hastened. He flung himself before the image of the goddess and prayed for four days, refusing all food. The goddess was so moved by this self-imposed suffering that she appeared before him at last in all her glory.

"Is that all you demand?" she exclaimed, "just rice

and milk every day? You shall have it. But ask also for something more attractive than that."

The boy thought for some moments. He wanted nothing more. So the goddess, in her generosity, produced a strange fruit, unlike anything one had ever seen, and handed it to him. "This fruit," she said, "will confer immortality on whoever eats it. Take this too."

The boy hurried home. His widowed mother beheld the fruit and thought that money would be far more desirable than immortality. So she told her son to take it to the palace and present it to the Rajah, from whom a handsome reward could be expected for so priceless a treasure.

The Rajah, indeed, rewarded the boy liberally. But after gazing at the fruit for a while His Majesty decided that the boon it conferred was far from desirable to one so weighed down by cares of state. Would it not be better to give it to his favourite queen, thus guaranteeing her eternal youth?

To Her Majesty he bore it, but the faithless woman, as soon as his back was turned, made a present of it to her lover, a stalwart Captain of the Guard.

The Captain, though honoured by the Queen's attentions, used to go through the ritual of love with her more from courtesy than passion. His heart was really with a lovely young courtesan, and to her he hastened with this strange fruit.

The courtesan was overjoyed at first; but after a while she felt she had no wish to prolong indefinitely this life of sin and shame. To whom could she offer the fruit? Who, she wondered, was most deserving of immortality?

The Rajah, surely! He was a just ruler, the father of his people. So to His Majesty she bore the fruit and laid it respectfully at his feet.

The King recognised it instantly, for there had never been earthly fruit like it.

"Where did you get this?" enquired the astonished monarch.

"From the Captain of the Guard," confessed the courtesan, demurely.

His Majesty slowly traced back the links of the chain.

"So," he reflected, "are happiness and dignity of so little consequence!" Disillusioned, he abandoned both throne and world and took to the simple life, wandering into the jungle, his hair unkempt, his body covered with ashes.

Asceticism is the disappointed man's refuge. It is an escape—a milder way than suicide, for life at least remains, and it brings not dishonour but a strange grace that is akin to divinity.

When the gaunt, emaciated figure of the sadhu, as the ascetic is called, stalks like a living skeleton through bazaar or village (for he is guided by strange impulses to undertake all manner of pilgrimages), every Hindu bows his head low in worship. The devout take the dust from under his feet and place it upon their heads. Some beg for favours, for have not sadhus the power of gods, able both to curse and to bless!

The most extraordinary penances are undertaken by these men. One erects a gallows and is suspended head downwards, swaying gently over a flame. Another has vowed to hold one arm above his head for a period of seventeen years, at the end of which time he will, of course, not be able to lower it, for it will have withered long before. Another sits with his fist clenched until the nails grow through the palm, emerging through ghastly gashes on the other side. Others crawl laden with chains, or have metal skewers thrust through their tongues, cheeks and arms. Others still, like the Trappists, have taken an eternal vow of silence. There are over ten million such men in India, drawn from all ranks of society. Some are genuinely pious, others merely mad; the rest are rogues

intent on gulling and robbing the public. But insane or reprobate, they all receive their full measure of homage from the gaping multitude. They enjoy a reverence born of awe and dread. The simple and superstitious cower in terror before them, believing that every sadhu can at will assume the form of a tiger or alligator and gobble them up. Whatever is said is believed of these semi-divinities. Credentials are never examined.

The story is told of one sadhu who arrived with a band of followers at the house of a Calcutta Brahmin. It was stated that the sadhu had attained such power by his austerities that he could live for months without food. The Brahmin lodged them all in his house, and, true enough, the sadhu ate nothing all the months he stayed there. Nor could food have been smuggled to him in any way.

The Brahmin was so impressed by what he saw that he put up with the great man's disorderly disciples, who were not only rowdy and dissolute, but not above thieving. When the sadhu, guided as always by the divine impulse, decided to depart, the Brahmin piously presented him with a purse of several thousand rupees. Years afterwards he encountered one of the disciples at work on a field. Asking after the health of the great man, the Brahmin learned to his horror that the sadhu was a humbug.

"But," exclaimed the Brahmin, "if he was not indeed holy, how could he have lived for so long without food?"

"I used to vomit for him after each meal," said the ploughman calmly.

There have been innumerable instances, even in our own time, of sadhus seating themselves in the middle of a roadway or of land cleared for building. All the urging of officialdom is powerless to move them, for no Hindu will ever permit hands to be laid upon these holy men, devout or humbug. The divine summons, it is explained, has brought the man here and he must remain until the

divine summons bids him go. The traffic meanwhile has to make a detour and the builders must wait, at a cost of who knows how much to landowners and the State.

At one end of the ascetic scale we have the Aghoris, who eat animal excreta as well as corpses. Nothing, they hold, is unclean and proclaim this view so avidly that Aghoris have been found robbing graves and munching dead children by the roadside. At the other end are the sublime disciples of Yoga, who have acquired such a mastery of their breathing that they can throw themselves into a trance for days. Hindus believe that man is but a spark of the divine, pent up in a bodily frame. They strive to free it of this incubus. The word Yoga means union and suggests a return of the spark to the divinity. To attain this the Yogis have evolved a series of most arduous exercises, spread over a wide span of years. First there must be a monotonous and entirely mental repetition of one word, preferably the name of a god. Next comes concentration. A very near object is selected and the gaze is fixed intently upon it—some select the tip of their nose or their navel. This is followed by a complicated process of breath control consisting of long periods of complete suppression, varied with breathing in through one nostril and out through the other. Next posturing is practised—the body has to assume eighty-four different attitudes, each more impossible than the last. Here is one of them : “Place the left foot upon the right thigh and the right foot upon the left thigh ; bend with the right hand the right great toe and with the left hand the left great toe (the hands coming from behind the back and crossing each other) ; rest the chin on the interclavicular space and fix the sight upon the tip of the nose.” The auditory nerves are also subjected to protracted strain in an effort to catch sounds that occur within the ears themselves.

After years of such violence on the nerve cells, inflicted mostly in the small hours of the morning while all is quiet

around, a state of self-hypnotism is produced in which the victim suffers from all manner of hallucinations, ecstatic and otherwise. "In ecstasy," states the German scientist Max Nordau,¹ "the excited part of the brain works with such violence that it suppresses the functioning of all the rest of the brain. The ecstatic subject is completely insensible to external stimuli. In healthy persons the sexual nerve-centres are the only ones which, conformably with their functions, are so differentiated and so adapted that they exercise no uniform or lasting activity, but, for by far the greatest part of the time, are perfectly tranquil, storing up large quantities of nutriment, in order, during very short periods, to decompose this suddenly and, as it were, explosively. Every nerve-centre which operates in this way would procure us voluptuous emotion; but precisely among healthy persons there are, except the sexual nerve-centres, none which are compelled to act in this manner. Excited brain-centres operate in this way, and the emotions of delight which accompany their explosive activity are more powerful than sexual feelings, in proportion as the brain-centres are more sensitive than the subordinate and more sluggish spinal centres."

It is claimed for the Yogis who lose themselves in their trance-visions that the secrets of the entire world are open to them. They are said to be thought-readers—and most of them are. They are also thought-transferants and clairvoyants. Manifestly they are mesmerists. They are believed to be in constant communication with the gods and with the dead. Time and space are nothing to them. They can transport themselves across hundreds of miles in a flash by sheer force of will; and they live, it is solemnly affirmed, for many hundreds of years.

One thing is definite. Their control of breath is so extraordinary that there have been recorded instances of Yogis suspending their animation and seeming dead for

¹ *Degeneration*, by Max Nordau. (Heinemann, 1895.)

periods varying from a few days to five or six weeks. While in this condition they have even been buried in the earth, in a grave to which there was no inlet of air ; and when dug up, they have been able to resume their breathing, a trifle feebly at first, but in time not the least bit the worse for the adventure. The exploit is, however, attended by the gravest risk, since the Yogi may be unable to resume his breathing at the appointed hour, especially if the period selected is at all protracted. It is declared by many that Christ had mastered this art of breath control¹ and that Lazarus, his disciple, had put himself in just such a trance. That is why, when informed that Lazarus was dead, Christ showed not the least anxiety. All he said was that the sickness was "not unto death, but for the glory of God," implying that it was but a step in his religious exercises. When, however, he was later informed that Lazarus had been dead for some days, he hastened to Bethany. He called in a loud voice, "Lazarus," as if to rouse him from a trance.

In India there has been one remarkable instance of a trance lasting forty days. It occurred in Lahore in 1837, and is vouched for by Dr. Honigberger, who was court physician at the time to the famous Maharajah Ranjit Singh. A Yogi named Haridas put himself into a trance in the presence of the Maharajah himself, the entire court and Sir Claude Wade. The man was then buried in a garden outside the city. A close watch was kept upon the grave for forty nights and days. At the end of that time the Yogi was lifted out of the grave, cold, stiff and still unconscious. Animation was restored by the application of warmth to his head, by rubbing his body and forcing air gently into his lungs. In a little while the man recovered completely. But far from being holy, he was an out and out reprobate, who had acquired this mastery of breath

¹ Yoga was practised in India at least five hundred years before Christ.

by arduous exercise. There were constant complaints to the Maharajah of Haridas's loose moral conduct. In the end the Yogi eloped with a Khatrany woman to the hills—and died there.

Yogis are capable of performing astonishing feats of physical cleansing. They have freed themselves from aperients by their ability to draw the lower bowel out through the rectum, wash it and then restore it. Others swallow a yard or two of thin cloth and whip it out again quickly to fulfil a like function through the opposite channel. Committees of medical men have seen with astonished eyes pure nitric acid poured on to the hand of a Yogi without injuring him but, when poured on to a table from the Yogi's palm, it burnt deep into the wood. Yogis have even drunk nitric acid, slightly diluted. And swallowed nails. Their control of nerves and muscles is astonishing. There have been instances of the pulse and heart being stopped at will, while doctors gaped at each other in bewilderment.

Of the impostors some are members of criminal gangs, waylaying suspicion by their piety. Others are merely wandering acrobats, anxious for the plaudits and the pice of the astonished throngs. Again and again those who seat themselves demurely upon a bed of spikes have been found with thin iron plates artfully fitted into their buttocks, coloured and speckled cunningly to deceive the spectator.

5

There is hardly a street in India without a temple. Some are no more than shrines, altars by the roadside, at which passers-by bow and enter into communion with Vishnu or the symbol of Shiva. In the large temples all day long there are worshippers. They enter silently, prostrate themselves before the god, and gaze in abstraction at the image without so much as a murmur. The

prayers are uttered in their hearts. Even when the worshipper passes his fingers from bead to bead of the rosary his lips remain still. The only sound audible is the striking of a gong by which the god is as it were summoned to attention.

The puja or daily service, on the other hand, is attended by endless din. Bells ring continuously. Conch shells are blown and there is a weird melody of gongs and drums throughout the service so that the congregation can scarcely hear the chanting priests. Each worshipper waves a lamp before the god and makes an offering of rice, flowers and holy water (all purchasable at a store outside). All must also give money to the gods, which of course is appropriated by the priests.

In the more elaborate temples there are many chapels. In place of the choir there is a troupe of dancing girls, who divert the congregation with their wagging hips and their sensuous shuffling. Dedicated to the gods from the immature age of three, they are expected to minister to the sexual appetites of the priests, who, when the girls are maturer, very considerably place them at the disposal of the male members of the congregation, in return, of course, for a fee. So every church has a brothel as an annexe, run by the priests. In the yard there are sacred trees with offerings of rice and pice laid before them. Bulls, cows and monkeys, regarded as sacred too by the Hindus, wander freely in and out of church, jostling the congregation or anointing them in passing.

In the temples of Kali, the grim bride of Shiva, always represented with blood upon her lips, the offerings are sacrificial. Goats are led in, bleating piteously, the worshipper's hands upon their trembling limbs. The priestly executioner with one deft stroke severs the frightened head and lays it in glory before Kali, while the rest of the goat is borne away to the priestly kitchens for the delectation of Brahmin palates at dinner. Such temples

are always awash with blood and filled with the odour of slaughter that Western nostrils would find it difficult to endure. Even in their homes the devotees of Kali, for lack of better sacrifice, shed a little of their own blood to appease the craving of this awful goddess.

Hindu cathedrals are as big as towns. The largest, the temple of Srirangam in Southern India, is 2880 feet long and 2475 feet wide. It is indeed the largest temple in the world ; and there are a score more in India that are not far short of this in size. Such temples are not buildings, but great enclosures of many acres, with elaborate gates and towers, wonderfully carved and ornamented. In the grounds there are lakes, chapels, shrines, meeting halls, bazaars, dwellings and stables for elephants, bulls and the chariots of the gods. On festive days the idol is tricked out in the finest robes and taken in procession through the temple grounds and out into the neighbouring town. It is a raucous procession. The symbol of deity is preceded by torch-bearers. Then come drummers and cymbalists, making wild music. Then a pious rabble, followed by more torches and drums. And at last in a large and ornate car, such as Juggernaut's, under the immense wheels of which in the hurly-burly many are crushed, comes the god himself, embedded in flowers. He sways as he goes, for the unwieldy car is drawn by an unruly horde of the devout, who cling to the chariot ropes like stalwarts in a village tug-o'-war. But the priests in the car, lolling at the feet of the god, suffer from neither giddiness nor fear. Their one concern is that the car should stop often enough for worshippers to rush forward with more and still more offerings for subsequent division as spoils from the night's excursion.

The devout are encouraged to build temples with the promise that "the sins of a previous hundred births" will be wiped out by this one act of piety. But there is a far more material spur. Temples are the securest

investment any Indian could find for his wealth. Whatever happens their dividends are assured. At the times of acutest distress their receipts are at their highest. There are offerings from worshippers, bequests from the pious, alms collected at the door, and still more brought in from house to house calls in the neighbourhood. So abundant indeed is the yield that, with priests and hirelings liberally provided for, there are still vast profits for division among the proprietary family.

Long pilgrimages are undertaken all through the year to one or other of these sacred places, men as well as women travelling hundreds of miles on foot or in bullock carts, resting by night under the stars or in one of the many *serais* provided by the pious along these pilgrim routes. Since the coming of railways many prefer to scramble into the trains, hundreds in each carriage, herded like cattle, and in view of the glory they are to acquire, indifferent to the inter-caste contacts of such indiscriminate overcrowding. They go to Benares to cast marigolds upon the large lingam of Shiva in the Golden Temple, to bathe in the sacred water of the Ganges, men and women together disregardful of modesty, or to cast into the holy stream the ashes and charred bones of some relative who died before he could be brought here.

Among the pilgrims are the sick and the maimed, borne on stretchers, or upon a kindly neighbour's back, for the cure. Others are brought to await death; for it is the aspiration of every Hindu to die upon the ghats of the Ganges at the sacred city of Benares. Thus, at every illness in middle life, no time is lost by the family to jostle the sick man here and lay him with his feet in the water, until through exposure and neglect, if nothing more, he surrenders his soul to Kali—or Vishnu, according to his preference. If there is a delay the relatives, tired of waiting, fill the sick man's mouth and nostrils with mud and leave him as food for the alligators and vultures. It is better,

they feel, that he should die thus ideally and win salvation than wring out a few more wretched years from life and miss the glory which they have provided. If, despite these precautions, the poor wretch recovers, he is proclaimed an outcast, for in the eyes of Hindu law, having been laid here, a man is already dead. His property passes to his heir. No one, not even his children, will eat with him or allow him to enter his own home. He has cheated the gods: the world has no further use for him.

Pilgrimages are undertaken as a thank-offering as well as a penance. It is a not uncommon sight in India that a man, clad in no more than a loincloth, should lie full length upon the earth, stretch his hands to their full extent above his head and mark off the dust with his fingers; then, rising and toeing this point, lie down again and repeat the performance. In expiation of some sin, or perhaps as a bribe to the gods, he has undertaken to journey thus to some distant shrine, measuring his length all the way for a thousand or more miles. It might take him years. He carries no luggage. He knows that all those who aspire to salvation will feed him. So he goes on, and there are dozens more ahead of him on the road, or following behind.

At special seasons every haunt of pilgrimage is transformed into a fair-ground. With penance and prayer is combined the heartiest merry-making. It is the only form of holiday known to India. Crude booths are run up to sell gods made of earthenware. Restaurants abound, for even the pious must be bodily sustained. There are numberless side-shows with fortune-tellers, performing bears, jugglers and snake-charmers. There are hastily-contrived bazaars with finery for the women, toys for the children: paper windmills, whistles and birds. There are also merry-go-rounds, swirling in a riot of melody. The approaches are infested with beggars, displaying

open sores, swollen limbs, and advanced stages of leprous decay. Before each is spread a dirty cloth for offerings. As the pilgrims themselves are poor, money is seldom flung upon the cloth. Some give rice—often no more than five or six grains; by evening there might be enough for one mouthful; though it is not uncommon for a sacred bull with one flick of its black tongue to remove a whole morning's charity. Also here are the performing sadhus, lying on nails, munching live coals and practising other weird antics to attract the generosity of the devout.

So thronged is the fair-ground that the gaily dressed women and children can barely crawl. They have come in bullock carts, in *ekkas*, on mules and on camels. They will remain here for days, sleeping huddled together under the stars. Epidemics will take a heavy toll. Thousands will be borne off by disease. The police and health authorities battle grimly against prejudice and fervour. But how can they hope to succeed?

6

Let us now turn to the offshoots of Hinduism—religions that began as reform movements. The most famous of these is Buddhism, which actually numbers far more devotees than Hinduism itself, though not in India. As has been seen, Hinduism very adroitly contrived to devour the chief tenets of Buddhism, and to convert Buddha himself into an incarnation of Vishnu.

The Buddha—his name was Siddhartha Gautama—lived five centuries before Christ. He was the son of a petty prince, and was born and brought up at the foot of the Himalayas, on the borders of what is now the State of Nepal. Lapped in luxury, surrounded by pomp and brilliance, blest with everything a young nobleman could desire, he had tasted of love to the point of satiety. By the time he was twenty-nine his pleasures wearied him.

They were hollow vanities. Life surely held more than this for man !

It was then that he saw, while out with his charioteer, a decrepit old beggar go hobbling by. " Such is the way of life," said Channa, the charioteer. A little later he saw a man suffering with a loathsome disease. Later still he encountered a corpse, swollen, eyeless, torn by the birds and beasts. " Such is the way of life," repeated Channa. And then there passed an old ascetic who had renounced life to find salvation.

The young prince decided he would do the same. There was so much in life to which he desired an answer : the mystery of sorrow and happiness, of virtue and vice. The decision barely made, he was informed of the birth of an heir. " Still another tie to break," he murmured.

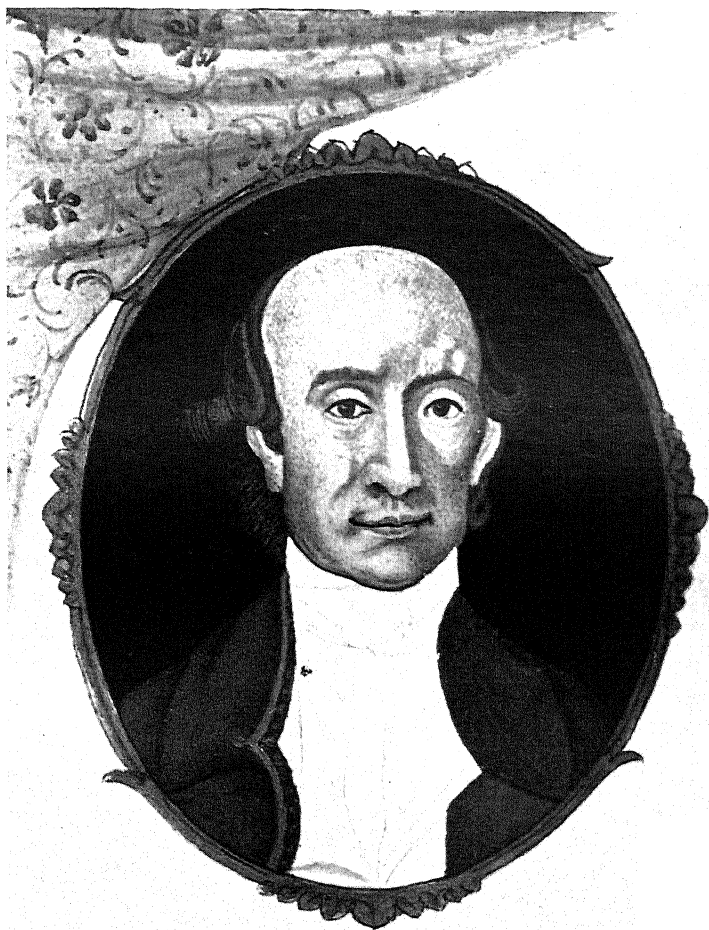
He crept by night into the bedroom, where by his wife he saw the child asleep. For some moments he struggled with the wish to clasp the infant in one first and last embrace, but afraid of disturbing them, he turned sadly away. Through the lordly chambers of the palace he passed, then out into the silent moonlight. With his charioteer he rode through the night, doubts crossing his mind. The lure of luxury called him back, the love of wife and child. But he would not turn. The next morning he cut off his flowing locks, took off all his costly ornaments, and sent them back with his charioteer. The world was renounced. The prince became an ascetic, fasting, mortifying his flesh, undergoing all the prescribed austerities of the sadhu.

So intense was his enthusiasm and so arduous his penances that in time he became no more than a living skeleton. He sat exposed to the elements, naked, covered with mud and ashes, feeble in mind and body. Again and again he swooned. The folly of these practices eventually dawned upon him. The brain, he reflected, should be vigorous, not crushed and starved. How else could it

cope with life's problems? So he bathed, put on new clothes and called for food and water, to the utter disgust of his companions. To them he was a backslider, unequal to the ascetic strain. But the Buddha ignored them. Refreshed, he sat under a Bo-tree at Gaya, meditating. Here he found enlightenment, and attained Buddhahood. He evolved a gospel and set forth to communicate it to the world. From town to town he wandered alone. Nobody would listen to him—or, if they listened, laughed. Buddhism was a strange religion—without priests, without castes, without ritual or vestments. It was hardly a religion at all, for it denied the very existence of God. There was no promise of an after-life, nothing more than complete annihilation, attainable only by right conduct—by purity of thought, speech and action. Indeed Buddhism was no more than a philosophy. A conquest of self.

There was both beauty and nobility in the Buddha's teachings; but the mind of the populace was unable to appreciate or grasp it. To meet their needs it was overlaid after his death with the very things the Buddha had condemned. Priests were appointed. Instead of renouncing their baser self, Buddhists resolved on renouncing the world. Every Buddhist country to-day is overrun with monasteries. In Tibet, almost the entire population is monastic. The Buddha's teachings are forgotten, only the cutting of the tree under which he meditated is preserved with tenderness. It flourishes now in Ceylon, propped up in its senility with pillars and embankments.

A contemporary of Buddha, who attracted far more attention in his lifetime, was Mahavira, founder of the sect of Jains. He never sought to leave the Hindu fold. But within it, and under the attendant eye of the Brahmin, he proclaimed the sanctity of all life, human, animal and insect. To this day Jains walk the streets with a duster, sweeping the road in front of them, lest they tread inadvertently upon ant or flea. The monks wear veils over



WARREN HASTINGS
By a contemporary Indian artist.
(Victoria and Albert Museum)

nose and mouth to prevent insects from being destroyed by their breath. For the same reason they do not bath or allow their food to be cooked. Like all Hindus they believe in reincarnation, which (for them) has been reduced to an exact science. Every Jain with a family of daughters knows that this fate is his punishment for having in a previous existence misappropriated funds. The child-bride who chances to lose her husband is consoled with the thought that in a previous existence she was unfaithful. The wicked return not only as the lowest animals, but often as vegetables : if beyond redemption, they come as potato or onion.

7

Mohammedanism, in its simplicity of faith, its lack of ritual, its freedom from priests, its belief in only one God, presents a complete contrast to Hinduism. Indeed no two religions could be more unlike. It lacks even the mysticism that many Western creeds possess. Just a prayer from the heart with no intermediary between man and God. That is all it requires. Yet in how many faiths do the priests not insist on preserving a monopoly of the approach to Heaven.

Their temples or mosques are no more than open courts, with just a fountain for washing the hands, the face and the feet. There are no inner rooms with shrines, chapels or holy of holies. No incense at all is used. A muezzin, a mere attendant of the temple like a verger, stands up in the minaret, calling the faithful to prayer, as the church bells do : *La ilaha illa 'llah, Muhammad Rasulu 'llah*—"There is only one God and Mahomet is His Prophet." The worshippers troop in and are provided with mats on which to kneel. From somewhere in front one of the older members of the congregation begins the service in a low musical chant in Arabic—an alien language to the Moslems of India, as Latin is to the Catholics of Europe and Sanskrit to the Hindus.

With their faces towards Mecca, the worshippers raise an open hand on each side of their heads, bow low, and drop gently to their knees. From this position they make further obeisance, lowering the head until it touches the ground. On days of festival, the service overflows into the side streets and the fields beyond. It is most inspiring to see this vast congregation bow, rise, kneel and prostrate itself, with a military precision that is in accord with this spirit of this militant faith.

It was founded by a poor, untutored shepherd's lad, who lived lazily among an idolatrous people on the coast of Arabia, tending the camel of a rich widow, whom he eventually married. It was the best piece of work he had done yet ; for Mahomet had come to be regarded as rather a loafer, fond of sitting about and dreaming. He was twenty-five at the time of his marriage ; his wife fifteen years his senior.

Until he was forty Mahomet¹ does not appear to have done much more than day-dream. Then the fruit of all his pondering was communicated to his friends. There was, he declared, no more than one God. This was by no means an original discovery, for living six hundred years after Christ and already acquainted with many Jews, he had absorbed much from these monotheistic faiths ; yet to the people of Mecca, where he preached, his utterances were rank sedition, for they bowed their heads to many gods, at none of whom would they allow Mahomet to sneer. Yet not only did he sneer ; he even dared to say that idolaters and unbelievers would perish in hell.

Although Mahomet had taken the precaution of wrapping himself in blankets for every prayer meeting so that the sweat should pour from his brow and give an air of divine inspiration to all he said, it did not save him from the wrath of Mecca.

¹ Mahomet was born on August 29, 570.

That flourishing town on the edge of the desert owed its prosperity solely to the throng of pilgrims who poured in to worship the Black Stone, or Kaaba, set up in the market-place. The pilgrims were to Mecca what the holiday crowds are to every tourist resort in Europe. They brought trade, provided employment. To shut them out because of some new-fangled theories would have meant ruin. Mahomet was denounced. To his followers was given the name "Moslem," which means "traitor." Mecca was a sanctuary. The law forbade any blood being shed there. But short of this, every torture that could be conceived was applied to Mahomet's followers. He himself was stoned and all but murdered.

At first he wavered. He even went before the Black Stone and recanted much of what he had preached. But though this was received with enthusiasm by the populace, he repented and proclaimed that the Devil had used his tongue for the recantation. From that moment it was apparent that he could no longer hope to remain in Mecca. He fled to Medina on the very night that it had been decided to murder him in his bed. He was pursued almost all the way.

He was fifty-two years old at the time. The rest of his life was spent fighting. He organised marauding bands who attacked and plundered the caravans of Mecca. He also raided neighbouring lands—all in the name of religion. Allah became a god of battle. He commanded the faithful to slay every unbeliever. Mecca strove to protect its caravans with convoys. Fierce fights ensued, in one of which Mahomet was knocked down and nearly killed. But the battles proved inconclusive. After protracted warfare, a compromise was finally arranged. Mecca was to remain the place of pilgrimage under the new faith. The Kaaba was identified with the true god. Within seven years of his flight Mahomet returned as master: the Prophet of the new faith. Within a century the militant spirit of

Islam bore the creed in triumph to the Atlantic coast of Europe and burst through the barriers of Hindustan.

To-day there are three hundred million Moslems, all of whom turn to Mecca in prayer. Five times a day every Moslem, no matter where he is, must engage in worship. Again and again in the larger cities of India to-day, one may see a taxi-driver pull up suddenly and, with his scarf spread upon the pavement, bow and rise with simple fervour under the eyes of his bewildered fare.

There are two important religious observances in Islam—the great fast of Ramazan, an entire month surrendered to fasting by day and feasting by night. And the Mohur-rum, which commemorates the death of the Prophet's two grandsons, Hassan and Hosain. This is a religious pageantry, with pasteboard tombs and bloodstained chargers, led through the streets to a frenzied beating of breasts and anguished weeping. An ironic fate makes one or other of the numerous Hindu festivals always clash with these Moslem observances, causing conflict and bloodshed.

There are ascetics among the Moslems, known as fakirs. Some of them lead retired, solitary lives, but droves of fakirs may be seen wandering about the country, some with beggar bowls, others with zithers and a song on their lips like the troubadours ; others still performing as the Hindu ascetics perform, for the delight of the multitude. At the Moslem fairs one often sees by the tomb of some saint a troupe of dancing dervishes, whirling wildly and even dangerously around. The milder of these sometimes have little children thrust into their arms by adoring parents to give the child a sort of joy-ride, as one might on a roundabout or on an elephant in the Zoo. To the throb of a drum, the dervish begins his fantastic measure. After a round or two the child is rescued and the dervish rewarded.

8

An attempt to bridge the gulf between Hinduism and Islam was made in the sixteenth century by an illiterate weaver known as Kabir. He tried to evolve a sort of religious Esperanto into which the two conflicting faiths could be fused.

Insistence was laid on the worship of only one God, but in a spirit of tolerance, Kabir permitted a subsidiary pantheon of Hindu deities. Ceremonial and mode of worship, he declared, did not matter in the slightest. It was purity of heart, charity and truth that bore each man along the path of glory.

It is recorded of Kabir, as an illustration of his attitude, that one day a number of dervishes called at his house. The customary hospitality that was expected of him, he could not give—there was nothing to offer. Nor were his neighbours able to help him. So he sent his wife out. "Find some kindly person," he said, "and borrow some food for these visitors."

His wife hesitated. "There is a grocer in this street," she said at last, "who looks at me with the eye of desire. You would not have me go to this sinner for anything?"

"Go instantly to him," said Kabir, "grant him all he desires, and bring back something for these dervishes."

The woman went.

The grocer said: "If you swear solemnly that you will come to me to-night, you can take all you want from my store."

The woman took the oath and hurried home to Kabir with rice, oil and food.

That night there was a heavy downpour of rain. Kabir's wife was only too glad to avail herself of this excuse to remain at home. But her husband insisted that her oath should be kept. So he carried her himself on his shoulders

through the darkness and the rain to the house of the grocer, and there he waited patiently outside for her.

The grocer, surprised that the woman should have come through the narrow muddy street with feet unsoiled, insisted on being told how she came there. Blushing, the woman revealed that her husband had brought her.

At this the grocer shrieked and fell back senseless. When he recovered he ran out and threw himself at Kabir's feet, gave away to the poor all he possessed, and himself adopted the life of an ascetic.

Kabir's precepts were developed by Guru Nanak, who established the sect of Sikhs. This pioneer band, denying that there was any material difference between Hindu and Moslem, found to their surprise that resentment came not from the Hindus but from the Mohammedans. So bitter a persecution was launched against them by the Moguls that the Sikhs, like the Pilgrim Fathers, resolved to set forth and establish a State of their own. The Guru Govind, whose father had been tortured to death by Aurungzebe, transformed the peaceful creed into a militant order. The sword was made a symbol of worship. Each man was instructed to bear the surname of Singh, which means lion. But how could this small band battle against the entrenched order of Mohammedanism? He appealed to the Hindu divinity Devi to guide him. After weeks of prayer, receiving no response, he sought the advice of Brahmins and ascetics.

At the time Govind was a young man of twenty-five, tall and handsome. A susceptible young widow, eager to captivate him, tried all her arts without avail. Finally she decided to pose as a sadhu so that he might come and consult her.

Possessed of means, the widow engaged many accomplices who spread about the district the news that a most holy sadhu had arrived there. It was also stated that this pious "man" enjoyed the favour of the goddess Devi.

Govind promptly sought an interview, but the widow, to fan his eagerness, put him off to fresh to-morrows. At length she agreed to see him, but made it a condition that Govind should come at midnight and alone.

Govind suspected nothing when ushered into the presence of the psuedo sadhu. They talked together for a while ; then the widow retired, and divesting herself of the saintly garb, reappeared in silks and jewellery. She seemed young and bewitching at that magic hour. But Govind, far from succumbing, reproved her angrily and rose to go.

The widow instantly took her revenge by raising the cry of " Thief ! " Govind, however, proved equal to the emergency. He took up the cry himself ; and in the darkness seized the widow's brother as the apparent culprit. In the ensuing confusion he contrived to slip away.

The Sikh hour came with the decline of Mogul power. They carved out a kingdom for themselves in the Punjab, and upon its annexation by the British, vowed loyalty to the new and tolerant Raj, which they assisted with eagerness during the troubled years of the Mutiny.

There are barely three million Sikhs in India to-day. In obedience to Govind's command they still wear long hair, short trousers, a dagger at the waist, an iron bangle and a comb. But the influence of Hinduism is asserting itself. In their sacred city of Amritsar the Hindu gods have been allowed to creep up to the golden temple by the enchanted lake. Sikhs now present offerings in Hindu temples ; many of them wear the Brahminical thread and keep the Hindu festivals. The reform has been undermined : only the militancy remains.

9

There is one other religious community in India to consider—the Parsees, who were originally Persians. They were driven from their country thirteen hundred

years ago by the Moslems, and found a refuge on the west coast of India. With them they brought the sacred fire, which, according to their prophet Zoroaster, who preached a thousand years before Christ, represents the Sun, the god of light and truth.

There are a hundred thousand Parsees in India, more Indian than the Moslems, for they have been longer in the country. They form economically a formidable body, for an essential of their creed is prosperity. No poverty is ever encountered among them, for every Parsee provides through a committee for those financially embarrassed.

Birth alone entitles one to be a Parsee. No converts are admitted. Prayer, being essentially individual, is said at home, where the sacred flame is constantly tended. There is no sabbath, and worship in the Fire Temples is a rarity confined to special festive seasons, of which there are but five or six in the year. But, so that his religion shall be with him throughout the day, the Parsee has been enjoined to wear a sacred shirt and the sacred thread, which at intervals he must tie and untie.

Burial is forbidden. Since the elements are sacred the Parsees can dispose of their dead neither in the earth, fire, nor water. They lay the bodies reverently upon grilles in vast Towers of Silence, where, while prayers are muttered, screeching vultures descend and devour the flesh before the eyes of the sorrowing relatives. In Bombay there are five such towers in the heart of the European quarter; and not infrequently a careless vulture drops some choice morsel of his grisly repast into the midst of the horrified guests at some elegant garden party.

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CHAPTER VII

SEX

I

THE attitude of the East towards sex is essentially the exact reverse of our own.

In the West the sexual act is looked upon as a degrading bodily function, unclean and disgusting ; excusable only when employed for fertilising. Even so it remains a deplorable if inevitable expedient. At no time must it be so much as hinted at in polite society.

In the East sex is regarded not only as a bodily function, as indispensable as food and sleep ; but it is both spiritual and ennobling. The gods have hailed its joys. It is the ecstasy of eternity. The one abiding glory of paradise, where the impulse shall know neither wearying nor ageing.

In India, especially among the Hindus, through the inspiration and example of the gods, it has become the preoccupation of the hours of leisure. In the West, where sport claims so large a part of one's spare time, where mental recreations abound, where at worst the social round, with dining and dancing or even drinking and gambling, holds one in thrall, there is not the same over-indulgence in sex. But in India there is no entertaining apart from such family functions as christenings and betrothals, which occur rarely oftener than once a year. Few read. Fewer still turn to sport for diversion. Sex is the one joy. Days and nights are abandoned to it in ecstasy.

2

Control over the sexual indulgences of the people can be employed by no State ; for it is impossible to pry through shut doors. The indulgence of man and wife, even illicit intercourse, may be as unbridled as you please. Religion alone can apply a check, by appointing individual consciences as its policemen.

In India, both religion and tradition have thrown the reins to passion, which, given its head, is carrying the race to destruction. Vitality is being sapped by sexual recklessness. It is this, together with the ravages of climate and a wholly inadequate diet, that has reduced a people once in the forefront of civilisation to the level of the inferior races of the world. For mere numbers mean nothing. Parade the 350,000,000 peoples of India how you will, they will be light in the scale against the citizens of any small state endowed with intelligence and vitality. The city states of Greece were small, so indeed was Rome, yet they founded vast empires. Britain herself is but a cluster of small islands—and is not Japan so too?

Sex in India has been made the focus of interest by the sacred books. It figures in the hymns and in the inspired philosophies. In both the revered epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, sexual licence is extolled. "All women and men are without restraint, O lovely-faced one. This is the real nature of mankind, any other is to speak untruly, as the holy tradition teaches." The gods set a deplorable example. It is said of Shiva that he possessed the miraculous power of prolonging the love embrace indefinitely. Once, it is recorded with a reverence not unmingled with envy, this god lay with his divine spouse for a thousand long years of the gods, each day of which was equal in span to a year of mortal men. While he revelled thus, his fellow gods, anxious of the outcome, hastened to the tireless pair and begged Shiva to curb his manly power. That gracious god, whose generative organ is worshipped to this day in millions of homes and temples in India, listened to their plea and with admirable self-denial, brought his protracted pleasures to an end.

We see the greatest gods seducing innocent maidens. "Give thyself to me, Kunti girl," pleads the Sun god, "and thou wilt find peace, O timid one." The girl was shy; but the more she refused, the more he pleaded, until

finally, incensed, he cursed her and, in fear, she yielded. We see goddesses tempting mortal men. "When he saw her, the hair on his body bristled, and he marvelled at the perfection of her body." Indeed, the lewd practices of the gods are too abundant even to catalogue. Even the ascetics, leading their pious, saintly lives, indulge in the joys of sex. Some live in open sin. Others, denied human contact, produce orgasms with their thoughts.

"The frequently seen ideal of the Indian, and above all of the warrior, of the blissful life," states Professor J. J. Meyer, translator of the Mahabharata, "is intercourse with thousands of lovely women in the bloom of youth, smiling with long lotus-eyes at the man, winding their rounded arms about his neck, and pressing their swelling firm breasts against him—women who press great swelling hips, and thighs like banana-stems against his body, who give lips red as the bimba-fruit to be sucked by his, and who as they glow in the sexual act (*surata*) not only receive, but also give. And thus the princes of old India in particular were much given to the joys of love, and Indian literature tells us of many who, owing to an over-eager indulgence in the *surata*, fell victims to consumption and an early death."¹

The whole of Indian literature is full of sex. Detailed descriptions are given of the delights of sex. The tales are glowingly sensual. In sharp contrast with the West, it is the woman and not the man who is the aggressor. She takes the lead, makes the tryst, keeps it, and, if discovered, finds a safe way out. Man is merely passive. He allows himself to be made happy. In the Indian version of the tale of Hero and Leander, it is not Leander but Hero who swims to meet her lover. The rule is that woman offers her mouth, even if man gives the kiss.

This attitude springs from the belief that sex brings an intenser joy to woman than to man. There is a story in the

¹ *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, by J. J. Meyer.

Mahabharata of a famous king who while bathing in a lake found himself miraculously transformed into a woman. For months he bewailed his lot. "His whole soul was filled with mournful sorrow, and his mind and heart were troubled." But in time "she" went to live with an ascetic in the jungles and found the sexual joys so pleasing that when the gods offered "her" a chance of returning to masculine form "she" said: "The woman has in the union with the man always the greater joy. That is why I choose to be a woman. I feel greater pleasure in love as a woman, that is the truth, best among gods." It is held that the capacity of eating in a woman is twice as great as a man's, her cunning four times as great, her decision six times as great, and her impetuosity in love eight times as great.

The sexual power of a woman is so strong, the poets sing, that the kurabaka tree covers itself with blossoms when a lovely woman clasps it, the tilaka when she looks on it, the açoka when it is touched by her foot, the mango when her hand touches it, the priyala when it hears her song, the keçava or the bakula when sprinkled with intoxicant from her mouth.

Even the fairy stories are sensual. We read of men becoming pregnant while still men and the child emerging from the father's left thigh. We read also of one who was man and woman for alternate months. The simplest nursery rhymes lisp about fornication.

3

How can it be otherwise when the earliest years of every child are preoccupied by sex. From birth, marriage is the one goal. There is always an eye on the unborn generation. Religion requires that at the hour of death a son should apply the torch to the parental corpse and, while the flames play around it, crack the revered skull so that the soul may find an outlet.

Thus, while the birth of a son brings satisfaction, there is immediate concern about the child's own soul. He, too, must have a son—and so *ad infinitum*. From the moment of the boy's birth, the parents busy their minds with prospective brides. The marriage must be carefully planned. There are caste and other restrictions. Astrologers have to be consulted so that the stars might tell which of the few available brides would bring the greatest happiness and provide the coveted heir. The task is attended by many difficulties, for astrologers are not immune from bribery and fraud.

If the infant is a girl, the problem is all the acuter. Girls cannot easily be disposed of, although for every marriage one is naturally required. Religion enjoins with unremitting sternness that every girl should be wed by the time she attains puberty. To every parent who neglects this precept the sage Parashara has issued this awful warning, enshrined for all time in the sacred books: "If a man fails to marry his daughter even after she has reached her twelfth year his ancestors are cursed." Marichi has said: "He who offers a Gouri (a girl of eight) in marriage attains heaven, the giver of a Rohini (a girl of nine) Vaikunttha (a higher heaven), the giver of a Kanya (a girl who has reached the tenth year but not puberty) is given a place in Brahma Loka (the highest heaven), and the giver of a mature woman is condemned to hell." For it is firmly believed that each time an unmarried girl has her courses, her parents are guilty of the heinous crime of slaying her embryo.

It is far too grave a risk to run. Not only will the parent suffer damnation, but untold generations of ancestors, despite the countervailing ministrations of sons, will have to endure suffering through eternity. A way out was once provided by the destruction of a daughter at birth. All risk was thus avoided. At the coming of the British it was found that Hindu women were accustomed to slaying

their daughters by denying them sustenance. Some took more drastic measures. Mothers have been known to put opium on the nipple of the breast before suckling a daughter, so that the child may be poisoned. Girls have also been buried alive. In parts of Bengal the female child used to be placed in a basket and hung up in a tree, where it was destroyed by ants or birds. There have also been numerous instances of girls being taken to a river to bathe and induced to go further and further into the water until they were carried away by the stream, or, if they struggled, were thrust into the current by the parents.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was Governor of the Punjab, records : " The sister of the Maharajah was to be married to a great Punjab Sirdar. The family pressed for the lavish expenditure usual on those occasions—£30,000 to £40,000—and the local members of the State Council supported this view. The Political Agent—the State being then under British supervision—and I strongly protested against such extravagances in a year of severe scarcity and distress. Finally, the matter was discussed in full Council. I asked the oldest member of the Council to quote precedents—how much had been sanctioned on similar marriages of the daughter or sister of a Maharajah in the past. He shook his head and said there was no precedent. I said, ' How can that be?—the State has been in existence over two hundred years, and there have been eleven successions without adoption, from father to son ; do you mean to tell me that there were never any daughters ? ' The old man hesitated a little, and then said, ' Sahib, you know our customs, surely you know the reason. There were daughters born, but till this generation they were not allowed to grow up ! ' ”¹

Whatever affection seared the maternal breast was crushed so that the perils of eternity might be obviated. The boys were always worth rearing. They fetched a

¹ *India as I knew it*, by Sir Michael O'Dwyer. (Constable, 1928.)

price in the marriage market, the girl's people having to provide a dowry. But of the girls, if the family were large, only one or two were saved. No more. A similar antipathy towards girls exists in almost all Eastern countries : in China, where the destruction of daughters is still practised ; in Arabia, where before Mahomet, girls used to be buried alive ; among the Bedouins, who still beat the wife for bringing a girl into the world. But in Paraguay it was the boys who were destroyed as girls had to be bought for them.

The death of a virgin within sight of puberty is regarded as calamitous. In some parts of India an attempt is made to propitiate the gods by providing intercourse with her corpse. An Untouchable is hired for the purpose, for the act is regarded as unclean in such circumstances.

The early marriage of girls in India is also governed by the fear that, in the large communal households which still prevail all over the country, it is not possible to protect a girl from the designs of her more distant male relatives.¹ It is further held that once a girl has attained puberty her sex urge is far stronger than a man's, and it is both unfair and unsafe not to provide it with an outlet. One might add as additional cause the desire for the immature by the Indian male, for child brides are conferred not only upon grooms of their own years, but upon grown and even aged men. Throughout the Mahabharata one reads of the gift of recurrent virginity conferred by the gods as a special favour upon some maiden so that she should remain for ever alluring to men.

There is, for instance, the story of the youth Galava, disciple of a saint. After serving his apprenticeship, Galava asked what fee the holy man required. The teacher declined to accept anything, but the pupil being persistent, he at length said : " My price is eight hundred noble, moon-white steeds, each with one black ear."

¹ See Appendix C.

Galava set out to find them, but the quest proved long and fruitless. Search where he would Galava could not even find one such horse. Eventually he came to King Yayati and begged his assistance. The King was unable to help him, but afraid of offending the suppliant and receiving his curses, he conferred upon the young man his daughter, the lovely princess Madhavi, whom even the gods had desired for her beauty.

Soon afterwards Galava learned that King Haryaçva possessed two hundred of the black-eared steeds. So he hastened to His Majesty and offered the ravishing maiden as payment for the horses. "Enjoy her for a time," he said. Four such kings, Galava reflected, would enable him to liquidate his debt.

Communicating his plans to the princess, Galava learned with joy that she possessed the gift of recurrent maidenhood, for that, he knew, would make her all the more desired by men.

Luck favoured him. He soon found two other kings with such steeds in their stables. The purchases were made in each instance by hiring out the lovely bride. And then, with six hundred of the noble moon-white horses in his possession, Galava discovered that there were no more such animals in the entire world. To the saint he took the six hundred and suggested that for the missing two hundred animals, he should compensate himself with the lovely princess, still ravishing, still a maiden. The holy man's only retort was : "Why didst thou not bring her to me from the beginning?"

Repeated efforts have been made by the British Government to prevent these unions with children. As long ago as 1891, after a fierce conflict with the pundits, who accused Britain of trying to destroy the sacred foundations of Hindu life, the authorities were successful in raising the age of brides from ten to twelve. Marriages continued to be celebrated in immaturity, but their consummation



GATEWAY TO MADURA TEMPLE
Hindu architecture.

was officially deferred for two years. This was followed by the persistent cry throughout the succeeding decades—"What right have you to separate man and wife?"

Thirty-four years later, when the subject was raised anew in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi in 1925, it was learned with surprise that girls were still becoming mothers at the earlier age. "The very high rate of fatality," said one of the Members, himself a Hindu, "amongst the high classes in this country of newly-born children and of young married wives is due to sexual intercourse and pregnancy of the girl before she reaches the age of puberty or full development of her physical organs. The result of such consummation before bodily development not only weakens the health of the girl but often produces children who are weak and sickly."

For four years the subject was argued excitedly in Council. The Hindus were opposed entirely to any fresh raising of the age of consent. Consummation at the age of fourteen! It was too long to wait. Yet by 1929 the British succeeded in placing this law on the books; but to what extent it is being observed, only those who can pry behind barred doors may say with certainty.

4

From the moment her children can lisp it is every Hindu mother's concern that they will be sexually equal to the occasion when it arrives. So by way of practice, she subjects their little organs to a titillation that soon becomes a vice.

At the time of the consummation the young couple are still in the nursery. The sexual pastime is to them no more than a rapturous spasm to be indulged in at intervals all through the day and night. The pair, as a result, are soon worn out. The girl goes to an early grave through unrestrained child-bearing; the man becomes impotent

by the time he is twenty-five, and resorts to all manner of devices to recapture his virility. It has been so for thousands of years. Even in the earliest literature there are prescriptions for the repair of such ravages. The eating of flesh, denied normally to Hindus, is recommended. Onions, garlic and leeks are said to possess magical powers. There are other recipes which guarantee man the ability to satisfy a thousand women in one night. To this day the Indian press bleats in its advertisement columns of drugs and mechanical appliances to combat premature senility. Illustrated pamphlets and tracts, to serve a like end, are distributed liberally in the streets. They promise "to make you a man in one day"; to "renew all your lost vigour and enable you to enjoy the pleasure with increased delights."

How can things be otherwise when no restraint is practised or recommended. The scriptural definition of a continent man is one who approaches his wife only during her *ritu*, which is the period following the cessation of her menstrual flow. The revered Manu has laid down that "even a married man would be regarded as a Brahmachari (celibate) if he abstained from intercourse on the eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth nights of each fortnight." It is stated in the *Yadnyavalkya* that "on the first four nights immediately following on the woman's menses and on the nights of the full moon and the dark moon copulation should be eschewed; of the remaining nights the even should be used for sexual union." In any event no restriction is imposed upon the number of unions that may be effected in the course of any one evening.¹

Gandhi himself confesses in the course of his frank autobiography that he began to live with his wife when he was only thirteen years old. The interruption of school, which made him leave her for a time every day, proved, he says, most beneficial to his health. Every night found

¹ See Appendix D.

him in full enjoyment of his marital rights. Even when his father lay dying, and he was called from his wife's arms to massage the aching parental legs, Gandhi resented the interruption, but performed this act of filial piety, his thoughts always with his waiting bride. Sometimes on his return he found her asleep, but promptly roused her. He recalls, with remorse now, that he was actually in full enjoyment of the act when a tapping upon his door informed him of his father's death. His passion knew no curb, even when his wife was pregnant and so near her time. A few days later his child was still-born.

The hospitals of India are full of the wreckage of masculine passion. They form but a small percentage of suffering womanhood ; for among the unenlightened there is a dread of medicines and doctors. But of those in the wards, sex has indeed taken a terrible toll. Some are victims of hysteria and mental derangement. Katherine Mayo tells in *Mother India* of a child-bride she saw in hospital, playing feebly with a paper toy. The girl, who should have been at school, was married to a man of fifty. To what bestial acts and to what agonies he had subjected her are not revealed. But her mind gave way under the strain. She was too terrified now even to speak. Meanwhile, her husband was suing to recover his marital rights and to force her back into his possession. Another bride, married when a baby and sent to her husband at the age of ten, went mad under the sexual strain. After that, he beat her every time she resisted. She could at length do no more than crouch terrified in a corner. Tired of this reluctance he carried her in despair to the jungle and left her there to die. She was found, fortunately, and taken to an English hospital.

The venereal toll is appalling too. " In the thousands of gynæcological cases that I have treated and am still treating," says a doctor in India, " I have never found one woman who did not have some form of venereal

disease.”¹ Treatment seems purposeless, for the day she returns to her own home the woman is reinfected. Great physical havoc is also wrought by mature husbands upon brides who are no more than children. The flesh is torn, serious hæmorrhages ensue, bones are dislocated, often the pelvis is crushed by a large and reckless husband. Many of the girls are beyond surgical repair and roll helplessly in their agony until they die. It is most pitiful. Not a few of them have been subjected to unnatural usage and will remain crippled for life.

5.

A Hindu is allowed as many wives as he desires. But in practice the vast majority confine themselves to one, though the princes and the richer noblemen even now keep large harems. There are instances on record of Rajahs who have outshone Solomon in all his glory, for that Biblical chieftain had no more than a thousand women, counting every concubine, whereas the Rajah of Vijayanagar had as many as twelve thousand.

There is a strict injunction in the scriptures that no preference whatsoever should be shown to any of these women, so that each may receive delight in equal measure. In the harem each wife has a settled night for receiving her husband's favours. In the event of his being ill or away from home for a number of nights then the practice has generally been for the wives who have missed their turn to draw lots amongst themselves as to which shall wait on the master on his homecoming ; for manifestly it is impossible to make up any arrears in so extensive a household.

The direst penalties are visited upon those husbands who fail in their duty towards all their wives. There's the admirable legend of the moon god as warning.

“Daksha had twenty-seven daughters, the Constella-

¹ Quoted in *Mother India*, by Katherine Mayo. (Cape, 1927.)

tions. He married them to Soma, the moon. They were all without compare for beauty ; but Rohini outshone even her sisters. Therefore the moon loved only her, and partook of love's joys with her alone. Then the others went in anger to their father and told him that their husbands kept always with Rohini ; therefore they wished to live with their father and take refuge in asceticism. Daksha admonished the sinner : ' Behave in the same way towards all thy wives that a great guilt may not come on thee.' To his daughters he spake : ' Now he will treat you all the same, since I have so bidden him. Go back to him.'

" But the evil man went on doing as before. The poor rejected ones came with new complaints to their father. He warned Soma : ' Behave in like wise towards all thy wives that I may not curse thee.' But the stubborn man gave no heed to his words ; the daughters once more took their anger and grief before their father, and begged him to see to it that the moon god should also give them his love.

" Then Daksha grew angry and sent a decline on the offender. Sacrifices and everything possible the moon, ever decreasing, undertook, but nothing helped. As a result the plants and herbs also vanished away, whose growth and strength, indeed, depends on the orb of night, the lord of plants ; and as these last grew dry and sapless, and had no new growth, all creatures suffered and died of hunger. The gods asked the moon what was the reason of his decline, and when he had told them they begged Daksha to put a stop to the destruction of the world.

" He spoke : ' The moon must always treat his wives exactly alike and bathe himself in Prabhasa, the holy pilgrimage place of Sarasvati. Then he will set himself free from the curse ; he will henceforth for a half-month wane, and for a half-month wax again.' Thus that curse that fell on him for his partiality is to-day still at work."

Despite the warning husbands still have their preferences, and while the favourite wife receives her lord's

favours the others amuse themselves with lesbian practices and antics in which the eunuchs, despite their limitations, can play a part.

However numerous his wives, the Hindu has the right to appease his sexual appetite with additional maidens. Each wife, at one time, brought with her a troop of slave-girls, all of whom were at the sexual beck and call of their master.

But upon woman the strictest chastity is enjoined. "If a woman is unfaithful to her husband, then from to-day onwards, that is a crime leading to loss of caste." Whether he be dead or alive, she must have no other man. Even though she marries in infancy, proof of chastity must always be supplied by the bride. On the wedding night the "cloth of bliss," as it is called, is examined and the stains displayed to the assembled guests. The custom is prevalent among most peoples—among the Arabs, the Slavs, the Turks, the Yurakaras of South America, and even in certain parts of Spain to-day. If "the shed blood of innocence" is absent, it is the duty of the bride's parents to find the evil-doer. Brides, however, are generally equal to the emergency, using the blood of hen or goat and even red juice, to deceive the enraptured groom.

There are, odd though it may seem, many tribes in India, as elsewhere, among whom bridal chastity is by no means a virtue. Indeed it is something to be deplored. Husbands expect from their brides experience, and not the crude simplicity of the amateur. In Tibet a girl gets a ring from every man who has enjoyed her, and unless she can display at least twenty rings she is not likely to find a husband. The Uled Näil girls of Algiers are always sent out by their fathers to earn what they can by their charms. Those who return with most wealth are most easily married, for their earnings are proof of their sexual merits. It is much the same in Japan, where girls serve in the Yoshiwara, or national brothels, until they have earned enough to marry.

In some cases this goes on even after marriage. On the island of Augila, for instance, a husband rejoices when strangers queue up to lie with his bride on the wedding-night. The Hassanieh Arabs have their wives to themselves for only two or three nights each week; for the rest the women are at the call of all and sundry!

Among Hindus, however, there is held before every wife the shining example of Sita, who, though borne away by the giant Ravana, contrived to preserve her chastity. This example of spotless womanhood has been held before Indian wives for thousands of years.

Let us consider the Hindu wife for a moment. The match is never inspired by love. It is arranged by the two sets of parents without, in most instances, the parties concerned ever having seen each other. After the wedding, the young couple do not set up house on their own, but the bride goes to live with her husband's people, and becomes a sort of slave to her mother-in-law, under whose surveillance and control she remains for the rest of her life. In the husband's sight his mother is of far more consequence than his bride, who is indeed no more than a mechanical contrivance for yielding satisfaction and for bearing children. If she refuses him this right she can be set aside. If, although she denies him nothing, she happens to be incapable of bearing children, often through no fault of her own, she may still be set aside. She can also be divorced if the children do not live, or if they are all girls—for the husband's chief concern is to have a son who is hale and well, and he must find a wife who can provide him with this.

If, however, the husband happens to be impotent, then the wife is sent on a pilgrimage. She is placed on special diet, made to clasp certain trees, to kiss the member of an ascetic, and, most important of all, to spend a night in a temple renowned for its ability to lift the curse of barrenness. Here, while the woman lies in darkness, she is

visited by one of the hired stalwarts. "It was the god," they whisper to her reverently next morning; and she goes home happy.

Towards her husband a wife's demeanour must be one of constant submission. The sacred books, the Purnanas, have set down rules to guide her: "There is no other god on earth for a woman than her husband. Be her husband deformed, aged, infirm, offensive in his manners, let him be choleric, debauched, immoral, a drunkard, a gambler; let him frequent places of ill-repute, live in open sin with other women, have no affection whatever for his home; let him rave like a lunatic; let him live without honour; let him be blind, deaf, dumb or crippled; in a word, let his defects be what they may, let his wickedness be what it may, a wife should always look upon him as her god, should lavish on him all her attention and care, paying no heed whatsoever to his character and giving him no cause whatsoever for displeasure.

"Let her carefully avoid creating domestic squabbles on the subject of her parents, or on account of another woman whom her husband may wish to keep, or on account of any unpleasant remark which may have been addressed to her. To leave the house for reasons such as these would expose her to public ridicule, and would give cause for much evil speaking. If her husband flies into a passion, threatens her, abuses her grossly, even beats her unjustly, she shall answer him meekly, shall lay hold of his hands, kiss them, and beg his pardon, instead of uttering loud cries and running from the house."

So much indeed is the wife the property of her husband that she is expected, as we have seen, to sacrifice her own life at the time of his death by committing suttee. And despite the British ban, which has been in force since 1829, there are still instances of suttee, connived at by the rest of the family. Indeed, to the widow suttee seems the best way out of her plight. Suttee was, of course, originally a

means of safeguarding the husband from any revenge that a wife, driven beyond her endurance, might, in sheer desperation, take. The priests, being men themselves, with the door of marriage wide open to their order, have decreed that, in any case, guilty or innocent, a wife must be held responsible for her husband's death—not necessarily for what she may have done in this life, but doubtless for some sin of a previous incarnation, as a just punishment for which her husband has now been taken from her. The widow thus becomes a sort of outcast in her husband's home, where she must continue to live. She is cursed daily by her mother-in-law, who feels that but for this wretch's sins, her son might still have been hale and well. To expiate these sins she is ordered to perform penances. She must eat no more than one meal a day. Strict fasts must be undertaken at intervals. The hair of her head must be shaved, and the clothes she wears must be of the coarsest. She is allowed to take part in no ceremonial or rejoicing. Nor must she as much as look at an expectant mother, lest the evil of her glance affect the unborn child.

There are twenty-six million widows in India undergoing such suffering. Some of them, betrothed in infancy, have never known their husbands. For the rest of their lives they are doomed to live without any outlet to the passions so sedulously stirred by solicitous parents in their childhood. Suttee would have ensured a pleasant way out; more, it would have purged their souls of sin, and offered a fresh start with something to their spiritual credit at their rebirth. But, lingering in life, a widow must remain with her husband's people, and shoulder without a murmur the most menial tasks. If they choose, they can turn her adrift, and she may resort to begging or to prostitution. Nobody pities her; how can they, for have not the gods decreed her fate?

6

To the prostitute from time immemorial a place has been accorded in the scheme of things. She is not only tolerated, but is recognised and accepted. She enjoys a far more enviable position than the wife. She ranks indeed with the cultured and elect, as she did in Greece. She has opportunities of education that every wife is denied. She, far more than a wife, can prove a companion and a help-meet to man. She is free to go everywhere, while the wife is kept in the seclusion of the purdah, shielded from every masculine gaze save that of her own husband and sons. Throughout the history of India prostitutes have been accorded a place of honour at civic receptions and included even in religious processions. They attended race-meetings, cock-, quail- and ram-fighting, and were the principal figures among the audience at the theatre. They were received by Kings and Queens, and welcomed in the best houses. Most of them were fabulously rich and themselves owned the lordliest mansions.

There are instances on record of kings taking counsel with them. Their rights were protected by law, and they enjoyed the special privilege of being able to give or refuse their favours as they pleased—a privilege beyond the reach of any wife. In return their earnings were subjected to a sort of amusement tax, which in one State paid for the entire police force.

These “circulating beauties,” as they are called in the sacred books, these vendors of joy, were included among the supplies of every army setting out for war. They were even taken on hunting expeditions, for their need was recognised. No man of rank ever dreamed of going to stay with friends without bringing a certain number of courtesans with him. This was demanded by ordinary politeness.¹ In the Mahabharata we are told that Yudhus-

¹ *Manners and Customs of the People of India*, by the Abbé Dubois.

thira, the pious one, sent a most tender greeting to the harlots of the town he was approaching : " My dear friend, ask after the welfare of the fair-decked, fair-clad, scented, pleasing, happy, pleasure-fraught women of the houses of joy, whose glance and speech glide so easily and sweetly along."

When King Kuçika and his wife returned to their capital they were met by an escort of honour formed by the army, the great men of the kingdom, and the prostitutes. The scriptures also indicate how a guest should be welcomed : " To him came running up quite fifty pleasure-girls, splendidly dight, fair-hipped, young and tender, sweet to gaze on, wearing a thin red garment, decked with gleaming gold, well versed in speech and honeyed words, skilled in dance and song, speaking 'mid smiles, like the Apsarases in loveliness, practised in the service of love, gifted with the knowledge of the heart's stirrings, in all things skilful ; they offered him water for the feet, and other things, and marked him out for the tokens of highest honour. Then did they offer him well-tasting foods belonging to the season of the year. When he had eaten they showed him in all its details the enchanting pleasure-wood by the women's abode. And playing, laughing and singing gloriously, thus did the women, wise in their knowledge, wait on the youth of the noble nature."

At every festival the haunts of pilgrimage are thronged with these beauteous maidens, clad in their brightest array and crowned with wreaths of jasmine. They are accompanied by music and have come to the sacred stream to wash away their sins, so that they may begin afresh that night with a clean sheet.

Harlots are divided into five classes : the harlots of rulers, the city harlot, the secret harlot (usually a woman of good family who indulges secretly in the practice), the temple dancer, and the harlot of the bathing-places. Of these the temple dancer, or Devadassis as they are called, have come in for the sternest condemnation from the

West. They are acquired by the temples at the immature age of three, and delivered up to the lust of the priests. Some of these girls have been vowed to this service by mothers eager for offspring. Others are better disposed of thus than by infanticide. Boys too are often dedicated in the same way and treated in a like manner.

These Devadassīs are taught singing and dancing. They take part in the temple ritual as a sort of choir. The priests keep them for their personal use through the years of immaturity ; after that they are at the disposal of any male worshipper ready with their hire. By the time these girls are twelve they are retired from service. Most of them go to swell the harems of the rich landowners. During the recent battle over the raising of the age of consent it was bluntly stated by Members of Council that any departure from the already high age of twelve would ruin the future of the temple prostitute. " As these girls cannot find wedlock," said a Member of the Legislative Council at Delhi, " the mothers arrange with a certain class of zemindars¹ that the girls should be taken into alliance with the zemindar. If the girl's age is raised no zemindar will want her—then what will become of the girl?"

A few return to their parents, who view with not the slightest shame the career to which their daughter was dedicated. Indeed, is it not a matter of congratulation that the girl should have served as a prostitute of the gods? Others take to a life of harlotry on the streets, enjoying a distinction that places them socially far above their rivals.

7

For the sexual guidance of the community many books have been compiled. Some are more than two thousand years old. The most authoritative of these, revered as though it were sacred script, is the " Kamasutra "—which

¹ Big landowners.

means "The Art of Love." It is a complete text-book for men and women. The author, Vatsyayana, writing in 300 B.C., explains in detail such subtleties of joy as how, when and where to kiss, how to stroke the hair, how to strike with the hollowed palm, the art of marking with teeth and nails (which is merely a part of the sexual rite and must not be confused with Sadism), and the exact sounds of hissing and groaning that should accompany the union.

A most rigorous training is required for perfection. Women are expected to attain proficiency in sixty-four arts, including singing, dancing, playing on musical instruments, writing, drawing, colouring the teeth and nails, preparing perfumes, mimicry, sword-play, gardening, versifying, clay-modelling, and the ability to produce music by passing a finger along the rim of a glass. These accomplishments are believed to enhance a woman's charm.

Women are also told to cultivate the gaze that "can pull down the strong hearts of men." They must approach men with demonstrations of apprehension and desire, show a trifle of the body, yet when the man comes nearer, play the prude a little, refuse while pretending to yield. "When he begins to scorch you with his flaming glances and to lose his head, then you must defend yourself softly against him. . . . Let soft burning sighs of languor escape you. . . . And at the moment of pleasure make the charming noise of the green-billed cuckoo and of the quail, and of the swan, and of the dove and of the horse also, mingling them with your natural sounds, O woman of harmonious utterance." The very depths of the navels should quiver with love; and when all is over, the girl, with a languid movement of the brows, should give the man tired glances through half-shut lids. A little weeping is also becoming.

Variations are indicated in attitude, some so elaborate that they demand acrobatic skill. Others are merely bestial. There is no perversion of the modern world that is not included here. Biting is elevated into an art. Eight forms

are prescribed and should be employed only at the moment of intense passion. To vary the marks of the teeth upon breasts, shoulders, throat, thigh and cheek, the finger-nails must be used. There have been instances, some quite recent, of passionate men using scissors and sharp instruments for this purpose. One man in his frenzy of joy blinded a lovely girl in Southern India by a clumsy use of this weapon.

8

The temples of the Hindus, beautiful though many are in their architecture, their rich carvings, their gaudy frescoes, display so much sculptural obscenity that were one of them transported suddenly to London or New York it would instantly be raided by the police.

At the Black Pagoda at Karanak, for instance, we are confronted by a large representation of a lion and an elephant indulging in rapturous intercourse. Upon the walls are stone figures of gods and warriors, shameless in their postures. Here, and at other such temples where children come to worship, women, men and beasts prance in a riot of sensuality. We are shown homosexuality and the basest variations of the brothel.

This sensuousness is magnified at the festive season, when a large image of a goddess, utterly nude, is borne through the streets. Facing her is placed the figure of a male god, also nude. The two are so held that with the jolting and heaving of the crowd these raised figures perform the act of sexual intercourse to the raucous delight of all. At the spring festival Holi, the Hindus abandon themselves to a saturnalia. Obscene choruses are sung in the streets by girls and men. They throw a red powder over each other and spend the days leaping, dancing, and singing, and the nights in the utmost licence. Even the most respectable roam the streets as bacchanals.

Hinduism is indeed so steeped in sex that even in its

highest forms it bears the taint. The Bairagis, an order of celibate monks, generally have a large number of nuns attached to their monasteries and live with them in open sin. The Chaitanites, too, a mendicant order to which both males and females are admitted, pair off as man and wife, the women affecting the garb of widows. The nuns of this order are actually ex-prostitutes, driven by their age to abandon their calling. The Sahajas approve of promiscuous intercourse. The order of Bauls goes even further, maintaining that "sexual indulgence is the most approved form of religious exercise."

9

In certain parts of India, especially among the aboriginal tribes, polyandry is practised. It is a common thing for a woman among the Todas to have three husbands, and among the Kulus to be married to all the husband's brothers at the same time. Among the Nairs of Southern India the women often take as many as twelve husbands. They contrive to get on very well together, each taking it in turn to live with the woman for a set period of time. Where nothing of this nature has been arranged, one of them, before bolting the wife's door, leaves his staff or shoes outside as a sign.

Often the outcome of great poverty, polyandry has also proved the only solution to the grave disproportion of the sexes that has been brought about by the reckless destruction of girls in certain parts of the country. In the Mahabharata, we find the five sons of Pandu married to the one bride, Draupadi. The practice is most prevalent among the tribes dwelling on the Himalayan slopes, in Travancore and in Tibet.

The Gonds, a primitive, half-savage people, living for the most part in the jungles of Central India, are at the other end of the scale, with not a vestige of restraint in sexual indulgence—before marriage. Young men and women indulge in promiscuous sexual intercourse. Among the more advanced tribes it is not an unusual practice to

shut up all the marriageable young men at night in a booth by themselves so that the bride of to-morrow might be spared their attentions. Once married the girl is the property of her husband. Adultery is punished by slicing off the nose.

Among the Todas the wife is placed at the disposal of every visitor. The Kukis place all their women, married as well as single, at the disposal of their Rajah. But it is manifestly impossible to notice all the disparities that must exist among the three hundred diversified millions of India.

The practice of the Moslems, however, must not be overlooked. Every Mohammedan is allowed four wives, and as many mistresses as he pleases ; for the ardour of the Prophet often burst its sensual bounds, and the faithful have very magnanimously been permitted an equal laxity.

As we have seen, Mahomet married an elderly and wealthy widow whom he had served as camel-driver. To her he remained faithful until her death. After that he took two young brides, one of whom, Ayesha, became his favourite. Later the establishment was considerably enlarged, nine wives and concubines being added. Then came the scandal over his young cousin Zainib, whom he married to his adopted son Zaid, and "when Zaid had accomplished his want of her," the Prophet married her himself. There were endless conflicts in his harem. Mutiny broke out among the women when an Egyptian concubine bore him a son and the Prophet, in his joy, was indiscreet enough to shower favours upon her. Another of his wives was the Jewess Safiyya, captured with her husband after a battle. The husband was executed, but Safiyya, because she was beautiful, was borne to the bed of the Prophet the same evening.

How can any Moslem be strictly continent with such an example ? They are, in fact, far more sensuous than the Hindus, with a delight in strong perfumes, a love of beauty, a passion for music, paintings and gardens, and a craving for all the joys of the flesh and the palate.

CHAPTER VIII

IGNORANCE

I

BESIDES the fetters we have examined, India is encumbered by illiteracy, poverty and an unbelievably primitive outlook.

At no time in their history have the Hindus enjoyed very much in the way of education. Temple schools there always were, for here as elsewhere the priests have made learning their monopoly. They were able thus to tighten their grip upon the mind while it was still supple. They denied—they still deny—all but the elements of education to everyone outside their own caste. They teach the multitude a few texts from the scriptures exalting the glory of the Brahmin; no more. The Brahmins themselves wallow in ignorance. Few understand the sacred words which, parrot fashion, they repeat, for the words do not belong to the language of the populace, but, as in most religions, to a language that is dead.

In the village schools, to-day as two thousand years ago, the teacher sits out of doors in the shade of a large tree, with his class in semicircular ranks about him. In high, intoning voices, some charmingly mellifluous, others a trifle shrill, they repeat the texts after him. When he sways, all sway; backwards and forwards, from this side to that.

The British have provided opportunities that did not exist before. Warren Hastings opened the first school in 1781, and his example was quickly followed. Fresh schools and colleges began to spring up. But English missionaries, coming soon afterwards, established institutions for instruction solely through the English language. The advantage of this captivated the imagination of that famous Hindu reformer Ram Mohun Roy, who pleaded at every opportunity that English should replace in the schools the existing babel of numberless tongues. His plea was

enthusiastically supported by Macaulay, who arrived in India in 1834 and became chairman of the committee on education. He asked by what right, when "we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English farrier,—astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding-school,—history, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long,—and geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter? . . . What we spend on the Arabic and Sanskrit colleges is not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth; it is bounty money paid to raise up champions of error." The plea was accepted. Instruction was provided in English. Lord Dalhousie enlarged on this. He created a department of Education. He established schools for teachers. He multiplied the number of elementary schools and encouraged non-official enterprise by providing liberal grants.

Vast developments continued until the time of Lord Curzon, who took precisely the opposite view. He favoured instruction in the vernaculars—"the living languages of this great continent." Yet the adoption of English gave the country a *lingua franca*, enabling people of south and north and west to understand each other for the first time in history. The discoveries of the Western world were absorbed without filtration through translators. The philosophies, ideals, aspirations, and political thought of Europe and America flowed in and transformed the outlook of India, making the literate hanker after opportunity and progress. Not that the vernaculars were wholly neglected. At some universities, even now, instruction is confined entirely to a native language.

Yet, after a century the educational advance has been infinitesimal. Only eight per cent of the entire population is able to read or write: included in that number are those with the slenderest knowledge of their own dialect. The

remaining three hundred millions of brown, grovelling humanity remain sublimely ignorant, a prey to superstition, to every base whisper of the mischief-monger and to the ensnaring extravagances of religion.

The women are even more abysmally ignorant. Only two per cent of them are literate in any sense of the term. Their instruction is opposed by every branch of opinion. The older women resent it, for daughters-in-law are less easy to control if they are enlightened. Husbands oppose it for much the same reason. Parents see no advantage in educating a girl at great cost for somebody else to reap the benefits: it is not as if a discount were allowed on the dowry. Besides schooling begins so near the time for nuptials. The priests back up this condemnation of education with texts from holy writ. No Hindu woman, it is stated, should come under any influence outside that of her family. "Women get sufficient moral and practical training in the household, and that is far more important than the type of education schools can give."

To defer schooling until after the girl's marriage would be equally futile. The husband's demands upon her for his sexual delight, the domination of the older women who set her menial tasks, and the strain of child-bearing—what opportunity could these leave, even if there were the will?

The Indian girl consequently remains ignorant. She can perform certain domestic duties, but knows nothing of child-rearing. She cannot sew. She has not the crudest idea of time, of punctuality, of tidiness, of cleanliness, of sanitation, often even of truthfulness. Living a cramped life behind the purdah, denied contact with any but her own sex, kept from social intercourse, travelling and the theatre, she languishes in her home. She enjoys neither fresh air nor exercise. An occasional walk on the roof, if it is shielded from the intruding gaze by walls sufficiently high, is all she knows. It is only natural that she should

fall such an easy victim to consumption. The death rate among Indian women is alarmingly high.

Education? "What has it done for Western women?" it is asked. "They are unhappy and restless. Many of them are shameless and as promiscuous in their relations as prostitutes. Indian girls do not even need education for a career, since they all have an opportunity of marrying, which girls in the West have not. So why introduce unhappiness and discontent into homes that have for centuries known peace and contentment? The women, not knowing any better, do not ask for anything different. So for Heaven's sake leave them alone."

But, for all that, something is being done by the English. Girls' schools have been established all over the country; and a fraction, though small, of the female population is at last receiving instruction. They are taught to read and write. Their character is being formed, their physique developed in the gymnasium, though all who hear of such manoeuvres throw up their hands in horror, saying: "What! Are our girls now to kick their legs about like *nautch* women?"

Only women are allowed to teach in such schools. No man, save he whom each will marry, must ever gaze upon their girlish faces. If the services of a male instructor are required, then he must, through a thick curtain, instruct with raised voice a class he must never see.

So progress is being made. Just over a million girls of all denominations are receiving instruction, though no more than five thousand, and these largely converts to Christianity, go on to the high schools.

2

Is education advantageous? One might well ask. There are thirteen universities in British India, and to these seventy thousand students flock every year. Only eleven

thousand of them succeed in attaining degrees. Their one desire seems to be for the magic letters B.A. after their name. Those who fail, not to be denied this pleasure, decorate their visiting cards and their brass plates with "B.A. (failed)." It has a definite value in the social scale. It proclaims that the owner has at least tried. Those years of study cease to appear futile when adapted to this use. The fantastic designation even has a monetary equivalent in the marriage market ; for are not the personal columns of the native press strewn with the demands of failed B.A.'s for brides? With every application, of course, the dowry must be indicated.

The thousands who pass every year make a wild scramble for government jobs. A few apply themselves to the law, but the other channels of employment are almost entirely ignored. Few Indians aspire to be doctors, school teachers, scientists or engineers. In so agricultural a country it is surprising that there should be such an indifference to agricultural callings. Government jobs—and if there is no room for them there, then they are content to become clerks at miserable salaries in the European trading houses ; for the Europeans alone offer any form of alternative employment.

The Indian is singularly lacking in enterprise. If he is a peasant—and the vast majority are peasants—his little patch of field and his future are completely in the clutch of the moneylender. If he is a man of means, then his wealth is invested in jewels or buried deep down in the earth. They shirk the risks of trade. The Parsees almost alone—and strictly speaking they are not Indians at all but refugees from Persia, preserving the old dress, the old manners, and the old religion—display commercial acumen. They keep provision stores, run cinemas, and control large iron and steel companies. The rest of the trade and industry of India is in the hands of the Europeans, the Americans and the Japanese. What astounding opportunities the

Indian is neglecting ! The country has vast resources awaiting development. But the students shake their heads in the universities when technical education is mentioned. " That sort of work is for the low class, not for us. Brahmins and higher caste Hindus require more dignified callings "—among which, extraordinarily enough, they include clerking.

So the hordes of disappointed graduates and failed B.A.'s who can find neither employment in government offices, since these cannot be multiplied indefinitely, nor a place in the European houses, because of the thousands of other Indians already employed there, either commit suicide in their despair or provide an outlet for their discontent by agitating against the Government and the entire white race. Surely (they reason) it is the fault of the State that there are not enough government jobs for all !

Mr. Gandhi's comment on education is illuminating : " The ordinary meaning of education is a knowledge of letters. To teach boys reading, writing and arithmetic is called primary education. A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has no ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow-villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters ? Will you add an inch to his happiness ? "

3

Ignorance is often accountable for the most agonising cruelty. The insistence of the Hindu religion, for instance, upon the sanctity of life in all its forms prevents death from providing a merciful release to tortured animals. Religion and conscience are satisfied while the animals suffer ; as we shall see. Thus are the loftiest flights of idealism, the noble philosophies, paraded so elegantly in

the lecture-halls and publications of the Western world, utterly negated ; and more than negated.

Let us look first at the cow, most sacred of all creatures in India. The cow is worshipped by every Hindu. Travellers dashing breathlessly across the vast continent always pause in amazement at the palm-joined homage paid by Hindus to some wandering cow. Not only the cow, but all her products are sacred, save only beef, since that involves the animal's death. The Hindu reveres the dung ; with it he plasters the walls of his home, employing it as ornament, disinfectant and ultimately as fuel. The urine is caught in little pots and drunk. " I have often seen," records the Abbé Dubois, " Hindus following the cows to pasture, waiting for the moment when they could collect the precious liquid in vessels of brass, and carrying it away while still warm to their houses. I have also seen them waiting to catch it in the hollow of their hands, drinking some of it and rubbing their faces and heads with the rest. Rubbing it in this way is supposed to wash away all external uncleanness, and drinking it, to cleanse all internal impurity."

An animal so revered is surely deserving of special care. But beyond this reverence no Hindu is prepared to go. The cows are allowed to wander about field and street. They invade the cities and bazaars in large numbers and have been known to delay tramcars and railway trains by flopping down indolently across the lines. Nobody troubles whether the animals get enough to eat, whether the supply of accessible grass is adequate or whether the garbage they are driven to devour from dust-bins (imagine cows doing that !) is injurious. The cow is alive : that is all that matters. The rest is the will of the gods. Who is man to interfere !

Actually the cows never receive enough nourishment. Their ribs stick through their sides and they sway with hunger and drop dead all over the place. Occasionally

they break into somebody's land and devour his crops. If the victim is a Hindu, he merely shrugs his shoulders and speedily drives the animal on to the field of his neighbour. If a Mohammedan, he sets about the beast with a stick and a religious riot follows. Every year at the sacrificial slaughter of cows by Moslems for their Kurbani festival, the Hindus rush out with any weapon they can seize. Hundreds of skulls are cracked on both sides. Many lives are lost. British troops alone are able to restore peace.

Yet Hindus, even Brahmins, have sold cows to butchers for a profit. Many are to-day shareholders of slaughter-houses, where the animal they worship is reduced hourly to beef and hide. But as the death-blow has not been personally delivered by them, remorse refrains from wringing their consciences.

God or no god, the cow is expected to work, and in the course of the daily round is subjected to indescribable cruelty. Millions of these sacred animals, starved, diseased, feeble, are yoked to the plough or employed for the transport of human beings and goods. As an aid to speed their tails are twisted. So frequently and so heartlessly is this spur applied that not a cow can be found in all India with tail joints that are not horribly dislocated. As a variant form of cruelty, the driver plunges a sharp stick into the genital organs of the animal. Nobody protests except the European, whose interference is resented strongly by the Indians.

And this is by no means the entire tale of horror. It is a common practice among Indians to slice off parts of one cow and graft them upon another so as to create a freak which they can lead from village to village and exhibit for a few pice to the gaping multitude.

All lessons in scientific rearing are scorned. None of this new-fangled interference with the decree of the gods will they countenance. Yet, inconsistently, they thrust

irritants into the vagina of the cow in order to make her yield more milk. More incredible still, suckling calves are denied their nourishment since that reduces the supply for market ; and when, on the calf's death, it is found that the mother's milk is affected, heartlessly they stuff the calf's skin, prop it up on sticks and place it just where the mother can see it from a corner of her dull eyes and be thus encouraged to go on yielding milk for quick sale and profit.

The milk in India, through neglect of the most elementary principles of dairying, is of so poor a quality that there is not enough nourishment in it for the children. That does not, however, concern the milkmen. They wring out the last drop of milk, and when the cow can no longer serve them, they sell her to one who can put the animal to other use. The cow can, for instance, if fed on mango leaves, denied water and all other forms of food, yield in her urine a dye known as *peuri*, which fetches high prices in the bazaar. Animals so treated die in a very short time in the most appalling agony. Or the cow may be sold for slaughter. If the vendor is a Hindu, he soothes his conscience with a countervailing act of virtue : he buys a cheaper cow from the same slaughterhouse, so that the life he has saved may cancel out the life he has sold. The rescued animal is either let loose into the streets to find what food it may ; or it is sent to a house of rest, of which there are vast numbers in India, each subsidised liberally by pious Hindus seeking salvation for their souls.

Yet in all save a few of these homes the animals endure the agonies of the damned. The funds are misappropriated. The sacred cow is left to starve to death. All who have visited these institutions tell the same sorry tale. Aged, infirm cows lie helplessly about the place and are consumed slowly by maggots, which, beginning at the hind-quarters, take days to reach the heart and put the

wretched animal out of her misery.¹ Others have birds perched upon their backs, pecking at the open sores. No one will put them out of their misery. It would be a sin to do that, just as in Western countries to-day the populace would gasp if man or woman dying a lingering and awful death were mercifully put out of suffering. The Hindus refuse, even at official instruction, to kill any animal. If a Mohammedan undertakes the task there will be a riot. What then is the way out, save for Britain to do the work herself and let the agitator proclaim it another injustice to the peoples of India.

Jain sensitiveness prevents the destruction of germs. In all Indian homes the walls swarm with spiders, cockroaches and lizards. Mangy dogs stand at the corner of every street and tremble slowly to death.

Yet with awful inconsistency goats are flayed alive because the skin can thus be stretched an inch or two more. Prohibitive ordinances remain as ornaments on the books. Societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals are foiled often by the native police themselves, who see no sense whatever in this absurd English law and are aware that a fine is less advantageous to them than a bribe.

In the Native States where the Maharajah is a law to himself, not so long ago a polo pony was soaked in kerosene oil and burnt because he had failed his royal owner during a chukker.

4

Do human beings fare any better ?

Consider the lot of the mother. Childbirth is regarded by every Hindu as foul and unclean. Only dirty, dusty, disused rooms are assigned for the confinement, and the new baby is greeted not with pretty beribboned garments, but with foul, cast-off rags, fragments of filthy

¹ *Mother India*, by Katherine Mayo.

mats, rugs or soiled packing off a parcel—all fit only to be destroyed.

Despite the great importance of a son, his arrival (as that of a daughter) is left to the tender mercies of an untrained woman of the lowest caste, for none of the higher grades—no, not even members of her own family—will so much as approach a woman in this state of uncleanness.

These untrained maternity nurses, or *dhais* as they are called, worse by far than any Mrs. Gamp of Dickens, arrive in their foulest clothes. The garments are infested with vermin collected at similarly vile accouchements. Many of the women are old, feeble, half blind. In the dim, smelly room, they sit with the groaning mother, taking care to shut out every particle of fresh air, which in some mysterious way is regarded as injurious to the mother's health. Patiently, idly, the women await the workings of fate. If there is any delay, a hand, rubbed first on the earth to give it better purchase, is thrust into the mother to assist birth. The hand is a-crawl with germs. There are coarse brass rings on the fingers, bracelets on the wrists, and the finger-nails are black and uncut. But even this may prove unavailing. The labour may indeed last "three, four, five, even six days. During all this period the woman is given no nourishment whatever—such is the code—and the *dhai* resorts to all her traditions. She kneads the patient with her fists; stands her against the wall and butts her with her head; props her upright on the bare ground, seizes her hands and shoves against her thighs with gruesome bare feet, until, so the doctors state, the patient's flesh is often torn to ribbons by the *dhai's* long, ragged toe-nails. Or, she lays the woman flat and walks up and down her body, like one treading grapes. Also, she makes balls of strange substances, such as hollyhock roots, or dirty strings, or rags full of quince-seeds; or earth, or earth mixed with cloves, butter and

marigold flowers ; or nuts, or spices—any irritant—and thrusts them into the uterus, to hasten the event. In some parts of the country, goats' hair, scorpions' stings, monkey-skulls and snake-skins are considered valuable applications."¹ Then the hand is inserted again ; and the tug-o'-war between the reluctant child and the tired *dhai* begins afresh. Not infrequently the child emerges in bits—first a broken arm, then a leg, while the mother continues to groan in her agony.

To cut the umbilical cord a piece of old tin or broken glass is generally used. Any wonder that the mortality among both mothers and children is so heavy—the heaviest actually in the world. "Available statistics show," states the census report, "that over forty per cent of the deaths of infants occur in the first week after birth, and over sixty per cent in the first month." The number of children still-born is also exceedingly high.

And the records say nothing of the countless corpses of infants flung into river, well and lake.

5

Simplicity is generally timid, always credulous. To the untutored millions of India the very air they breathe seems full of invisible evil shapes. Vaporous monsters claw vaguely through it, eager to obey the fell behest of every ill-intentioned foe. Every curse strikes a thunderous clang of terror into every peasant heart. All live in dread of the unknown. Their houses they surround with propitious signs ; their persons they deck with charms. To them, ghosts and demons and goblins are as actual as morning and evening. The evil eye is more potent than a knife ; envy more to be feared than assault by an armed gang. These are blows in the dark. They descend unexpectedly. They cannot be met and countered.

¹ *Mother India*, by Katherine Mayo.

To this day every Indian will grow pale and tremble at the sound of a curse. If it is uttered by a holy man, no matter of what caste or religion (for Mohammedan curses are equally injurious to the Hindus), then there is nothing to which the victim will not submit in order to have it withdrawn. The holy men—yogis, sadhus and fakirs—command the spirits, it is believed, in the way Aladdin commanded them with his wonderful lamp.

But a curse uttered by a neighbour—and curses fly in every quarrel—is received with far less awe. The victim generally waits to see if the curse is effective. If by chance some member of the household falls ill or dies—not an uncommon occurrence among an enfeebled, under-fed race—then the afflicted family goes grovelling to its enemy, taking the dust from under the feet, begging tearfully that the curse be removed. Touched, the other generally agrees. Water is sprinkled, a few passes are made with the twig of a *neem* tree and money changes hands—this seems to be an essential. If after this the curse is not lifted, since the party concerned is really powerless, the whole procedure is gone through again, with greater servility and the surrender of an even larger sum of money.

Not only neighbours, but even the dead are capable of casting spells. The most everyday dread is of a dead wife returning to torment her husband or her successor. At times men or women who have been dead for centuries take offence at some unwitting insult to their shrine. Once a low-caste Hindu fell seriously ill following a pause amongst some shrubs to perform, after the fashion of Indians, a function of nature. It was discovered later that the shrubs grew out of a forgotten and decayed tomb of some Moslem saint. It was now firmly believed that the illness was due to the anger of the saint. The relatives of the stricken man promptly went to the shrine and flung themselves abjectly before it. It was in a state of unholy

dissolution. The roots of a tree, forcing its way through, had split the shrine from end to end. The relatives vowed that they would put it in repair and proceeded at once to do so at ruinous cost. Almost immediately the patient began to rally and it was felt that the saint had been appeased. But, quite inexplicably, a few days later the man got worse and died. The money spent by the family had been wasted. But they merely shrugged their shoulders at the thought. They had done their best. Doubtless during the work of repair some important detail had been overlooked. So the curse had not been lifted.

Animals too are capable of having their revenge upon man. A serpent killed may suddenly take possession of its assailant's body. A frog crushed to death underfoot is apt to raise a sore under the arm. There is indeed a tabulated list of the ills caused by animal spells and the best means of propitiating the wronged beasts.

In Europe in the Middle Ages all forms of necromancy and magic were regarded as the work of the devil. Witches were persecuted by the ministers of religion. But in India the entire black art is allied to the Hindu faith. The priests and saints are said to possess special powers over the forces of destiny. Charms and love-philtres are as hallowed as the ornaments of the temple.

The powers of darkness are sometimes harnessed by covetous relatives to save the inheritance from being divided among too many. Here is the story of a Hindu family of the upper middle class. There were two sons, each of course married. The wife of the elder died after a long and painful illness. Then her husband began to waste away. It was suspected that a spell had been laid. Something had to be done at once to save the man's life.

An exorciser of evil spirits was urgently summoned. He came, much as a plumber would, attended by a mate. They stood by the side of the dying man, relatives and friends clustering round with concern. The devil-doctor soon

began to mutter some incantations and it was suddenly noticed that his young assistant was throwing a fit. The boy became violently agitated and flung his small frame about all over the room. It was instantly proclaimed that the evil spirit in possession of the dying man had now entered the boy.

The little fellow then began to speak. It was not his normal voice, but a strange sonorous bellow. The evil spirit, he said, had been summoned into the body of the dying man by his sister-in-law, who had succeeded in precisely the same way in removing the dying man's wife. How had she done it? Why, through the yogi living at the end of the road.

Everybody gasped in astonishment that a holy man should lend himself to so iniquitous a design. But, sure enough, it was found that the covetous sister-in-law had visited the yogi. In exchange for some gold bangles and ear-rings, he had given her a pinch of grey powder, which, he declared solemnly, held the spirit of a dead man. Wherever the powder went, there the spirit would go. The woman hurried home and sprinkled the powder, which was possibly poison, over the food of the elder brother and his wife.

The possessed boy, continuing with his fits, added that if a feast were provided for the priests and for the poor, a fat sheep slaughtered with certain ceremonies, and if the sick man partook heartily of the meal, the evil spirit would depart and leave him in peace.

All this was done; and, as any intelligent man would have foreseen, not long after that heavy meal, the ailing brother died. It was fate, people said. Had not every human and superhuman effort been made to save him?

The yogi was left unmolested. None knew what further havoc he might work if one dared so much as to upbraid him.

6

The entire art of medicine is reduced to spells and incantations. Pharmaceutical preparations are shunned by the simpler-minded, who it must be remembered form the bulk of the population. The spirits have to be handled in the approved fashion, sanctioned by tradition and hallowed by the practice of five thousand years. To pour into the ailing the odd concoctions of white doctors would be a grave danger. The spirits would take offence. In their rage they would work incalculable havoc. No ; they must be intelligently approached.

A man suffering from enlarged spleen, quite a common complaint in India, is laid tenderly upon the floor. A small wick burning in a saucer of oil is placed beside him. Near this a circle is drawn with chalk and at various points cloves, flowers, camphor and incense are laid. Next the man's stomach is bared. It is smeared gently with oil and two or three layers of leaves are placed over this in a specified order. A wax effigy is then made, to represent the patient. Into the stomach of this effigy a rusty nail is thrust, approximately where the spleen should be. The patient is now expected to groan, to feel the nail as if it had been thrust into him. Generally, expecting to, he does groan. He is thereupon pronounced cured.

Relief from snake bites, dog bites, and the lick of a poisonous spider, necessitates waxen effigies of reptile, animal and insect being burned slowly in boiling oil, which is then smeared over the wounds. In the milder cases, since the oil is soothing, the patient generally recovers.

A woman stricken with a serious illness lay dying in a village in Oudh until her husband had a vision. He received the divine injunction that not until her eyes were plucked out could she be restored to health. Then, miraculously, her sight would be restored too.

Passionately devoted to his wife, the sorrowing man, with trembling hands, held his wife down in the presence of the entire village and gouged out her eyes. The screaming woman endured her agony in the hope that the divine promise would be fulfilled. But it was not. The wretched woman died almost immediately.

Some illnesses require that a black dog should be decapitated at dead of night. Its head should then be boiled in water and into the resultant broth the patient should be plunged, again at midnight. In other cases suffering can only be allayed by a serpent biting the ailing man. There are even now men and women to whom serpents are brought once a month and they take the bites as one would take the waters at Baden-Baden or Vichy.

The Indian has no rules of health apart from prayer and propitiation. No system of ventilation, exercise or diet is practised or even known. Charms are worn as a safeguard from evil, and fortune-tellers are consulted upon every pretext to ensure that the right thing is done at the propitious moment. The date of no wedding can be arranged without the advice of fortune-teller or astrologer. No journey undertaken without a like guidance. As for moving into a new home, or so much as from one bedroom to another, it would be tempting Providence if those in a position to know were not consulted. Once a well-known Rajah spent a vast fortune in building a new palace. But the astrologers warned him that the place would not prove auspicious. So there it stands untenanted to this day. Throughout the history of India, in Mohammedan times as well as Hindu, the astrologer could be seen playing his rôle in affairs of State. No expedition was ever undertaken, no battle engaged in, no treaty signed without his advice. Strategy, tactics, military lore meant nothing; they were brushed brusquely aside if the astrologers shook their heads and said "No." Again and again strategic advantages were thrown away; again and again, with overwhelmingly

adverse odds, battles were begun because of the promise of the stars—which, alas, too often the stars failed to fulfil.

It is no uncommon thing for a seer to predict a man's death, with, as may be imagined, dire consequences to the unfortunate man's peace of mind. Here is a record from an Indian newspaper of a fairly recent instance: "It is reported from Bombay that a *bania*¹ named Trikamdas, an inhabitant of Ahmedabad, was informed by a Brahmin that his death would take place on a certain day in the month of Vaisakh. Thereupon the *bania* repaired to the holy shrine of Palitana to perform his funeral rites. But not dying on due date, he returned to Ahmedabad and interviewed the Brahmin, who said that he had made a mistake in the calculation, and that Trikamdas would die in the month of Sravan. The devotee has thereupon gone back to Palitana to die."

A Rajah whose death had been predicted abandoned all affairs of State and retired to the jungle to purify his soul. But his devoted Vizier followed him. Every argument was tried to induce the royal master to return. But in vain. Had not the astrologer prophesied it? The astrologer should know. So the Vizier went to the astrologer and dragged him into the royal presence in the jungle. "Do you still say that His Majesty is about to die?"

"Such is the decree of Fate," nodded the astrologer.

"And your own hour of death—can you foretell that too?" asked the Vizier.

"I shall die," said the astrologer slowly, "in seven years and two months from now. So the stars have decreed."

The Vizier instantly drew his sword and struck off the soothsayer's head.

"Look, your Majesty. How can you rely upon the word of one who could not predict his own death correctly?"

¹ Merchant.

7

Rumour plays havoc with the Indian mind. The bazaars buzz with whispers, some malicious, others fantastic. They all find ready credence. Rioting frequently follows. False stories circulated about strangers have led repeatedly to bloodshed. Do what they will the authorities are unable to prevent the havoc and slaughter : for one thing, because it can never be forecast with certainty where the next rumour may arise or what shape it may assume ; for another, because it spreads with such rapidity that it is not easy to overtake.

Here is an instance recorded in *The Madras Times* : " Some of the ignorant natives have given credence to a report that men of the Lubbay caste are prowling about the streets of the town with the object of kidnapping children, who, it is said, are wanted to be sacrificed in connection with the Harbour works. So firmly is the rumour believed, that every Lubbay is looked upon with suspicion, and some ugly quarrels have taken place.

" Yesterday morning in Popham's Broadway there was quite a commotion on a Lubbay being suspected in the way we have stated. It would appear that while the man was walking along the Broadway he had accidentally touched a little boy, and it being supposed that he wished to get the boy under his power in some sinister manner with a view to kidnap him, a mob of men got together to assault him, and he had to seek shelter in a shop.

" A similar rumour was spread abroad and generally believed in among the poorer classes of the natives when the Madras Pier was in course of construction. It is an idea prevalent among the ignorant masses of the natives that no large works, such as the Pier and Harbour works, can be carried to completion without the sacrifice of human life ; hence the ready credence given to the rumour we have alluded to."

Sometimes even the village policemen, though they wear the uniform and carry the baton of authority, lend a credulous ear to these wild tales. In the records of the criminal courts it is stated that " Wali, an old Bheel woman, about seventy years of age, and her sister Chitri, residents of Deshgaon, Nassick District, were believed by the villagers to be witches possessed of a hidden charm, by which they were supposed to have worked sorcery to which the deaths of several persons in the village were attributed.

" A religious mendicant arrived at the village and denounced the sisters as witches and forthwith the villagers laid hold of Chitri, swung her by a rope to a mango tree, and beat her to extort the hidden charm. She escaped without serious consequences. Wali, the other sister, who had gone to a neighbouring village to beg, was fetched to Deshgaon the same evening, and was the following morning swung by the feet to a tree near the village police-station, was maltreated in the presence and with the connivance of many of the villagers, and was required to disclose the hidden charm by which she and her sister caused deaths in the village. She was removed in a fainting condition to her house where she died the same day.

" Three persons were instrumental in causing her death. One, a police constable, swung her to a tree by the feet with a rope and struck her several blows with a hempen thong, another struck her with a shoe, while the third, the police *patel*¹ of the village, superintended the proceedings and instigated violence to the wretched woman. These three persons were tried and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment."

The best motives of the British Government are constantly being misconstrued either through sheer ignorance or through the malice of the politically disaffected. When,

¹ Chief.

for instance, out of obviously humane motives, it was suggested that the dogs affected with mange who stand and shiver in the bazaars, nosing feebly at rubbish and contesting for morsels with large horse-flies and rats, should be put out of their agony, there arose an instant outcry that the white sahibs wanted the tongues of these dogs for the preparation of their medicines. Every attempt to disinfect wells in times of epidemic are rigorously contested by Indians who promptly raise the cry of "Caste in danger" and die fighting rather than let their lives be saved by interference. In the same way, whenever a district is swept by smallpox and there is need for vaccination, all official endeavours are countered by the whisper in the bazaars that Indian women are to be vaccinated on their breasts!

In times of stress, during a war, for instance, the bazaar is more than ever swept by rumours. No news is always bad news, which, if one reflects, generally is so in official affairs. The worst is readily assumed in India. Wild stories fly around; and if they prove to be true, as sometimes they must, even the sober-minded among white men exclaim at the hidden means of intelligence the natives possess. But reckless guesses must from time to time prove correct. Of these alone one hears; over the rest a discreet veil of silence is drawn. All who were in India during the great European war will remember the wild rumours, generally so wide of the mark. It will also be recalled how upon two occasions premature bazaar whispers of the arrest of Gandhi were followed by serious rioting; and when, some months later, Gandhi was actually arrested and the newspaper posters proclaimed the news, the bazaar merely laughed, refusing after the double cry of "wolf! wolf!" to believe it could be true.

8

No one who thinks of India as a land of great wealth, aflame with wondrous jewels, will believe that it is one of the poorest countries in the world.

Yet it is.

At one end of the scale is unparalleled magnificence : nobles in costly silks and satins lolling in palaces of marble and ivory. At the other, grovelling in a poverty that is inconceivable, is the vast bulk of the population—more than three hundred million peoples, doomed to exist on an individual income of no more than three pounds sterling a year.

The population is largely agricultural. The bulk of India lives simply in villages, of which there are 500,000 scattered about the wide, sun-bitten plains, dotted upon the mountain-side, and strewn along the banks of the broad, roaring rivers. Here, blinking in the severe sunshine, the cultivator works upon his small plot of land, his wife helping, or perhaps cooking his simple, midday meal, the only repast he has in twenty-four hours. If the harvest is poor he must borrow money to live. He must borrow money anyway, as will presently be seen. In the village are temple or mosque, a shrine or two, and, hovering upon its fringe, the jungle, from which wild beasts appear from time to time to make a meal of some unfortunate villager. At intervals sickness claims wife or daughter, usually in childbirth. Or the villager himself may fall ill and die, for he hasn't much stamina. He is under-nourished, thin, all his ribs are tearing through his flesh. Only his children are round about the waists, swollen almost, as if about to burst. That is because they have been stuffed with food that fills but does not sustain. How can it, being just rice and water, thin bread and some weak cereals? The Hindus eat no meat at all ; and the milk, as we have seen, is of a wretched order, unappetising and inadequate.

The claims upon the family purse are unending. Money must be paid to the Brahmins at every turn. When a child is born there are ceremonies to be performed for which the priests must be paid. Sixteen days later the child must be cleansed from "birth pollution." At the naming of the child, on the first visit to the barber, which must be when the child is three months old, at the weaning, when the child walks, on completion of the first year, at the end of the seventh year, upon the occasion of the betrothal, upon marriage, on the first sign of puberty—upon all these occasions must the priest be paid for the good of the souls of parents and offspring.

And this is by no means the sum of the Brahmin's claims. At death the body must not be moved until it has received the Brahmin's blessing, for which of course the Brahmin must be paid. At the cremation, too, money is given to the Brahmins; and thereafter once a month for a year the Brahmins must be fed by the bereaved family, for it is held that whatever the priests eat passes straightway into the interior of the dead person.

How under such circumstances can there be any but the acutest poverty in India? Indeed, it is no uncommon sight in India to see women and children following the stray cows across the fields to gather up the dung; or panting breathlessly after camel and horse and elephant for a like reward: for dung is both a fuel and a manure, and has a cash equivalent in the bazaar which will help to purchase food for the children. Throughout the history of this ill-fated country the poverty has been as acute; nor was it until the coming of the English that the villagers were spared the additional depredations of Mahratta hordes, of conquerors who took all they desired, of famine and of epidemic.

The gaze of religion is so intent upon the after-life that material standards are regarded with utter contempt. Not the slightest incentive exists anywhere for betterment.

The happiness of the soul, not the body, is the concern. In order to meet the demands of religion Hindu peasants mortgage their harvests for years ahead to the local moneylender. At every new emergency the family hurries afresh to the moneylender to beg a few more rupees and sign away (with thumb-prints since they are illiterate) their inadequate all unto the third and fourth generation. At one time they used to sell their children into slavery ; they even sold themselves to provide food for their children. But the British will not allow them this privilege. There are State agricultural banks now to keep them from the moneylender. But escape from him is not easy. Born with the halter of debt about their necks, they grow up in his evil grasp, which tightens with the years. The moneylender spreads malicious whispers about the wicked, consciousless banks until the peasants are terrified to approach them. With touching faith they cling to the moneylender as to a benefactor. When he has got them hopelessly entangled, he will sell their land and turn them adrift. What becomes of them thereafter is not his concern. They may beg or starve or kill themselves for all he cares.

So abject is their dread of the moneylender that when, after weeks of famine, rain clouds appear, the peasants merely shake their heads and say sadly : " The moneylenders will not let it rain." They firmly believe that by the performance of certain rites, in which virgins must play a part, clouds can be driven off and rain kept at bay by the moneylenders.

9

Mendicancy being one of the paths to piety, poverty is by no means a crime in India, but a state to glory in. No man is ashamed of begging. Indeed, at one time, it was part of the training of every youth to be apprenticed to a religious teacher for twelve years, during the whole of

which time teacher and pupil begged their food from door to door.

In every emergency the easiest way out is by begging. The populace firmly believes that by giving alms it is storing up glory in heaven—so it does not care how these opportunities are multiplied. That is why the approaches to every temple, mosque and shrine are lined with beggars : thousand of beggars, seated with extended palms, swaying, wailing, displaying their sores, some self-inflicted, many leprous and highly contagious. They creep in their hordes to every *mela* and every bazaar. In scattered groups they roam from village to village and from door to door. Entire dispossessed families may be seen tramping the streets, craving a crust of bread from every passer.

Some people beg for special purposes—it may be to obtain money for a daughter's marriage, always a costly item, seeing that there is the dowry to provide, the priests to be paid and a feast to be spread for relatives, friends and all the clamorous throng who come unbidden to such functions. Or it may be that some Moslem wishes to give a decent burial to wife or son. Or perhaps he has not enough money to pay his taxes. From time to time one encounters an affluent man wandering about with a beggar's bowl, craving alms from the multitude. It is a penance he performs for having accidentally killed a cow. Rajahs, since they have taken to motoring, are apt to find themselves in this plight. It is the only way of expiating their sin. The money so collected must, of course, be handed over to the priests.

Here is an instance of how speedily a family in modest circumstances may be brought to ruin. This family lived in a brick house, in a little village ; which meant that they were better placed than those who dwelt in the mud and thatch structures around.

On the occasion of the daughter's marriage there assembled uninvited at the house bards to chant the family's

praise, strolling minstrels, dancing girls, wandering yogis, and a drove of lazy Brahmins, who expected to be fed and paid as well as the family priests. There were also vast hordes of beggars of all castes clamouring for food and money.

The host played his part nobly. Food was prepared for all and small sums of money were handed out. Then to everyone's surprise a further band of *sunyassis*¹ appeared, demanding backsheesh. Nor would they take what was given. A rupee a head they wanted. The host made a careful calculation. He had already poured out far more than he had anticipated. Funds were running very low. He went up to the *sunyassis*, spoke to them affably and offered them eight annas a head, which was half the sum they desired. His offer was rejected with scorn. A rupee each—or nothing, they said.

Angry beyond words, the host told them to be off. At this one of the *sunyassis* struck himself a violent blow on the forehead with a skewer. The blood spurting from the wound, he moved among the horrified guests, proclaiming that he had been driven to this by the host's meanness. The other *sunyassis* gathered quickly round their stricken comrade and proclaimed that he was about to die. They then began in sharp, raucous voices to intone a dirge.

Now no Indian, however enlightened, can tolerate a dirge amid marital rejoicings. Even in the broader-minded West the superstitious would view such a proceeding with horror.

It was obvious that these *sunyassis* would now have to be handled differently. The distracted host assembled the pious scoundrels. He paid them what they required and they went.

¹ Ascetics.

PART III
THE GOAL

CHAPTER IX

DAWN

I

ATTEMPTS to shed these fetters have been made repeatedly by discerning Indians. Ram Mohon Roy, as we have seen, fought valiantly until English was made the language of instruction in all the schools. Ranade took up his torch. Oddly enough he was a Mahratta, but, unlike Tilak, his patriotic zeal did not express itself in a bitter hate of all things English. He was concerned chiefly with equipping India for the rôle she should play in the changing world—the world of advance and invention and industrialism. He strove first to reform the Hindu religion. He wanted to rid it of superstition and all its evils. He reinterpreted the Shastras in the light of modern ideals. He endeavoured to bring India's social institutions into line with Western standards. He tried to educate the people for the responsibilities that lay ahead. He was indeed a patriot in the truest sense of the word.

He was supported in these aspirations by Gokhale, also a Mahratta and a Brahmin. A practical man, Gokhale thought it futile to cry for the moon, but engaged in a step-by-step battle for progress. He was by no means a servile apologist of British rule, but one of its keenest critics. Yet while he battled with the British for concessions, he essayed at the same time to raise the status of his countrymen. He tried to uplift the depressed classes. He waged uncompromising war on religious evils. His greatest contribution to progress was the formation of the Servants of India Society, whose purpose is to send out missionaries to equip the people for the fight for self-government. The members "frankly accept the British connection as ordained in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence for India's good." Their goal, they recognise, "cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient

effort and sacrifices worthy of the cause." All Servants of India are required to lead a pure life, to engage in no personal quarrel, to seek no individual gain, but to work for the advancement of all, without distinction of caste or creed.

There were also such reform movements as the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, which have been fighting idolatry, child marriage, and the caste system. But although they contain such eminent men and women as the Tagores within their fold, they have not a large following, numbering in fact all told not more than a quarter of a million persons out of a Hindu population of over 240,000,000.

The British have found that by force alone can reform be achieved. In the flush of early authority they succeeded in freeing Hinduism of the horrors of *suttee* and *thuggee*. They also checked the lawless hordes who preyed upon the people in the name of religion. But since the Mutiny Britain has fettered her own hands with the promise impulsively made that no religion shall be interfered with. It was prompted, of course, by the desire to placate a people still a little sullen at the thought of the pig-and-cow-greased cartridges the sepoys had been made to bite. Britain has kept rigidly to her promise. Consequently the social and moral progress of India has been negligible. Efforts have been made to achieve by persuasion what could no longer be attempted with authority. One or two enlightened Indians were induced to plead for the remarriage of Hindu widows, but a Bill to give this effect failed. The attempt to raise the age of consent and to put an end to child marriages led to a fierce struggle which raged for an entire generation both within and without the legislatures. In the end a law was passed, but who can tell to what degree it is being observed?

India's present leaders, with Gandhi at their head, are intent on dragging the country back to its primitive barbarism.

Gandhi is constantly denouncing progress and what he calls "Westernisation." We have already noticed his emphatic objection to education. Railways he condemns too. "Good travels at a snail's pace," he says, "it can, therefore, have little to do with railways. Those who want to do good . . . are not in a hurry. But evil has wings. So the railways can become a distributing centre for the evil one only. It may be a debatable matter whether railways spread famines, but it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil." Yet he continues to use the railways for travelling. Medical science also comes in for denunciation. "I overeat, I have indigestion, I go to a doctor, he gives me medicine. I am cured, I overeat again, and I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishment deserved by me, and I would not have overeaten again. . . . A continuance of a course of medicine must, therefore, result in a loss of control over the mind. . . . In these circumstances we are unfit to serve the country and to study European medicine is to deepen our slavery." And again : "Medical science is the concentrated essence of black magic. . . . Hospitals are instruments that the devil has been using for his own purpose. . . . They perpetrate vice, misery, degradation and real slavery." Himself a barrister, the profession appears to him as "degrading as prostitution." A thief, he declares, should not be punished, but the houses should be left open to him in order to shame him into honesty. When India attains independence he intends to abolish all armies, schools, hospitals and machines.

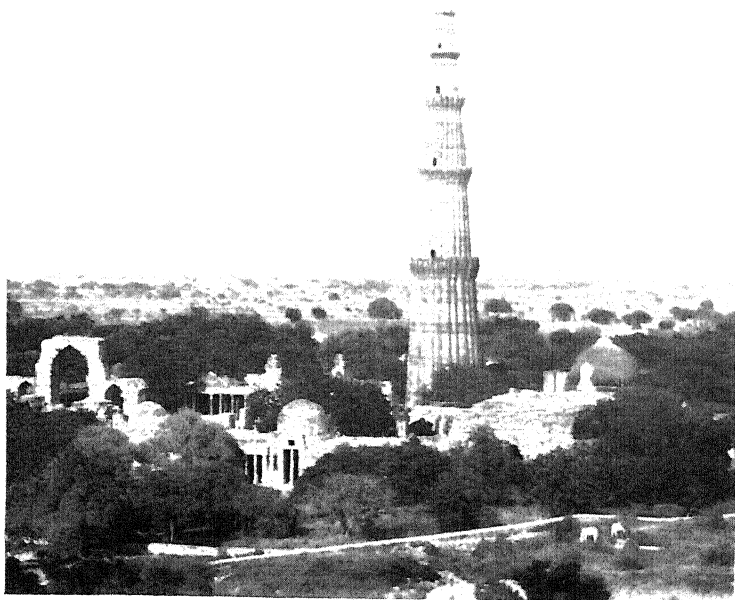
Of course, Gandhi is abnormal. One side of his brain is vigorous and active, the other side seems incapable of functioning. It is this that enshrouds him in a glow of mysticism. It is this, together with his simplicity and poverty, that makes him the Mahatma or Saint to the multitudes of India.

Meanwhile progress is at a standstill. The lot of the sixty million Untouchables is what it always was. The twenty-six million Hindu widows are still denied the right to remarry. The sexual excesses continue, sapping the vitality and destroying the stock. The proud Aryan race has degenerated deplorably. Preyed on by climate, wasted by incontinence, the peoples are weak, unable to resist disease. The normal three-score years and ten have dwindled in India to a mere twenty-three. Millions die before they reach their prime. Not one in ten survive their twentieth year. Each new generation inevitably grows feebler. From physical weakness spring mental and moral degeneration. That is why the history of India has always been the history of subject peoples.

2

The best answer to Eastern prejudice is supplied by Japan. That country Westernised itself with astonishing rapidity. She was resolved on assimilating all that Europe could give. Englishmen were engaged to construct the railways. Frenchmen reframed the laws. American experts drew up schemes of education, overhauled the postal services and modernised agriculture. Germans trained and equipped the army. Italians taught painting and sculpture. Within one short generation the entire country was transformed on progressive Western lines. Japan adopted the Christian calendar and even Western dress for the cities. English is taught in the schools, and all the signs in the streets, at the railway stations and on the trams are in English as well as Japanese.

This reforming spirit was applied with vigour in her reluctant colony of Korea, which rose in protest against Westernisation. But Japan was indifferent. The good of the whole was her concern, and she was resolved to ride over prejudice as a trans-continental railroad rides defiantly over individual rights of property.



THE DEVASTATED PLAIN OF DELHI



THE NEW DELHI

Turkey has been Westernised in much the same fashion by Kemal Pasha. The people refused at first to accept the smallest reform. They would not abandon the fez for panama or bowler. But Kemal brooked no opposition. Laws were passed making the fez illegal. The police were instructed to snatch off every fez they saw and to arrest and imprison those who wore them. At a dozen towns, urged on by the priests, crowds stoned the officials. It was said that the Koran and the Prophet forbade the peaked hat. Kemal instantly sent out what he called Tribunals of Independence, with troops at their heels. They hanged, shot and imprisoned hundreds of Turks. So terrified were the people in the end of this new inquisition that they put on the first hat they found. For days men were seen wandering through the streets with women's summer hats on their heads, the ribbons streaming in the wind.

Kemal also adopted the Christian calendar, as the Japanese had done. The metric system was introduced. Arabic script was abolished. The handshake replaced the old Moslem form of obeisance. Women were made to give up their veils and to mix with men on terms of equality.

By similar methods Soviet Russia has enforced her reforms. In India itself, the Emperor Aurungzebe, not in the flush of conquest, but after a century and a half of Mogul rule, attempted to stamp out the Hindu religion, which he regarded as an evil. Men armed with hatchets were sent out to destroy temples and idols. The most sacred of their temples was razed to the ground in Benares. On the site a lordly mosque reared its mocking minarets. Ancient centres of Sanskrit learning were compelled to close their doors. Large numbers of Hindus were forcibly circumcised and ordered to subscribe to the Islamic creed.

Surely when one recalls French harshness in Madagascar, Spanish oppression in Cuba and the Philippines, and the

American treatment of the Red Indian, Britain's record in India is stained far less with despotism than with benevolence.

3

Of course modern civilisation is not without its evils. It would be unjust to conceal them. If in India we find an undue detachment from worldly affairs, in the West the spectacle is the exact reverse. There materialism has run riot. There is a love of sensationalism that is apt to outweigh all life's spiritual values.

It would be futile to throw into this end of the scale such products of modernity at strip-poker, gang warfare, scientific crime, poison gas and the Klu Klux Klan. These are age-old expressions of human depravity in an up-to-date guise. They can be found in some form in every stratum of history. For there was always greed, always arrogance, always the desire to destroy.

Civilisation, however, with its concession to womankind of the right to select a mate, must inevitably cause millions of marriageable Indian girls to be denied matrimony. Most of them will be sex-starved, and must suffer the ills that ensue. The rest will abandon all scruples, bear children out of wedlock, or earn their living in the streets. Will this alter conditions very much in India? There are already, as we have seen, twenty-six million Hindu widows in precisely this plight. Most of them, though married, were widowed before puberty. To them sex must deny its joys until the end of time. So the scales, if held steadily, will be found to be even. If anything, modern woman, in the less subservient rôle of wife and mother, may possibly be happier. But that is a moot point.

Civilisation at any rate provides many compensations. It has made disease less terrible. Life has been prolonged by a score of years. And it has lashed mankind so closely together that it is impossible now for any community to

hold aloof. India must decide whether, like Japan and Turkey, she will stand in the front line, or doze spiritually by the wayside, a prey to all.

4

Let us see what Westernisation has done for India. Essentially it is an agricultural country. Less than 10 per cent of the people live in towns. That is to say over three hundred millions live in the villages and are dependent on the land for a livelihood. There is very little large-scale farming. The bulk of the country is divided into small holdings, and both Hindu and Moslem laws of inheritance favour their further division amongst heirs.

What with oppression, eviction, the periodic failure of the rainfall, and the increasing deterioration of the soil with the use of cow-dung as a fuel instead of manure, the countryside was once repeatedly devastated by famines. Modern science has brought this peril to a halt. Irrigation and rapid means of transport together ensure a supply in periods of the acutest shortage. Agricultural research institutes are at the same time engaged in increasing the output. With the growth of acreage yield there has been a large surplus of crops for export ; all of which serves to swell trade and bring prosperity to the village.

That conditions generally have been steadily improving since the introduction of Westernism is evidenced by the vast increase in population. Figures show that the population is bounding forward at the rate of nearly three millions a year. Since 1872 it has increased by no less than one hundred and forty-four millions.

This increased pressure upon the land is being eased by Britain's extensive scheme of irrigation, which has fertilised vast desert regions that are strewn to-day with settlements of smiling peasants and their extensive families. Over £120,000,000 has been spent on canals

and 44,000 square miles have been brought under irrigation. This is an arresting achievement. Great difficulties had to be overcome to rear the high walls of masonry and carve out the channels. There were also disease, climate and lack of transport to be fought. But the engineers triumphed and have supplied the world with its eighth wonder, the Sukkur Barrage, which stretches for a mile across the Indus and irrigates 8,000,000 acres. "Britain," it has been said, "makes a new Egypt in India every year and the world takes no notice." How true this is can only be appreciated when it is realised that the country under cultivation in the Nile Valley, the Delta and the Oases is less than one-third of the land irrigated in India by the canals Britain has supplied.

Railways, by providing transport, have made these newly fertilised areas habitable. They also afford access to the mineral wealth of the country—coal, iron, limestone, copper, manganese, gold, lead, zinc and tin. There are 42,000 miles of railway; this gives India third place among the countries of the world.

The pressure on the land has been still further relieved by the growth of industrialism. In this British capital, leadership and enterprise have played the chief rôle. Indians were not only reluctant and unadventurous, but they were handicapped by religious and caste prejudices. The higher castes, it has been decreed, must not work with their hands. So Britain has had to take the initiative.

Indian indifference to industrial opportunity is inscribed with more than ordinary legibility across the leather trade. In the country there has always been an abundance of hides and skins as well as of tanning materials. Yet these were shipped abroad in large quantities until the outbreak of war, by interrupting transport, necessitated that the one should be applied to the other within the country. Thus tanning came to be undertaken in India and a new and prosperous enterprise was set up.

The Parsees followed Britain's admirable industrial lead. As a result there is a thriving cotton industry in Bombay, employing over half a million people. The jute industry in Bengal employs 350,000 persons. There are also rice and flour mills, oil mills, steel and iron works, leather factories, paper mills and shipyards. Over a quarter of a million persons are employed in the coal mines. The metal industries absorb 169,000 and the chemical 109,000. The railways provide employment to over 800,000 persons. More than a million are engaged in the tea industry, which produces 300,000,000 pounds of tea a year.

Yet, despite its population of 351,000,000, the demand for factory labour in India is constantly in excess of the supply. The Indian prefers to remain with his family on short commons to venturing further afield, working in a factory and sending money home for the comfort of the rest. If goaded by necessity he does turn to industrialism, the work he undertakes is always temporary. He refuses to settle down. His heart remains in his home, whither at the first opportunity he will return. Homesickness, the thought of gleaning the harvest or of a family festival makes labourers to this day desert railways and mills without a word of warning. Trains may cease running, cotton be spun no more, the supply of steel and coal run out—they are indifferent to the world's demands. Home alone matters: the wife, the brood of brats and father, who is often but twelve years older than his son—all of them alas! so short-lived.

Any wonder that the output of each industrial workman is so low! Mills have been in existence in India for eighty years now, yet the number of hands required per loom remains much greater than in similar mills in Europe. With coal it is the same. The seams in India and in the United States are of an approximate thickness, yet the Indian miner's output is no more than an eighth of the

American's. Some Indians refuse to go down the mine unless accompanied by wife and child.

As a result of British enterprise, although less than a tenth of its peoples are even remotely connected with industry, India ranks as one of the eight chief industrial countries of the world. In trade she is surpassed by only five—the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Canada. Ships exceeding eight million tons gross clear with cargo annually from India's ports. In the heyday of the Mogul the entire sea-borne trade of India could have been put monthly into a cargo ship of five thousand tons.

It has been of unquestioned advantage to India to be associated during her industrial growth with the greatest maritime power in the world. Indeed it must in fairness be admitted that India could not have attained modernity without the assistance of a strong foreign power ; for her position is intrinsically very different from Japan's. India was divided by race, language and religion, whereas Japan was homogeneous and had a strong centralised government. Moreover, Britain had to supply the capital India refused to provide for industry.

As the Industrial Commission declared in 1918 India's " industrial system is unevenly and in most cases inadequately developed ; and the capitalists of the country, with a few notable exceptions, have till now left to other nations the work and the profit of manufacturing her valuable raw materials, or have allowed them to remain unutilised."

The future is rich with possibilities. There is already a vast balance of export trade in India's favour. To turn away from all this and listen to the anti-industrial counsels of Gandhi would be to throw away a heritage for a mess of pottage.

5

The English in India are by no means numerous. The entire white population numbers 168,134, over 50,000 of whom are women. Of the rest 60,000 are troops—that's the entire strength of the white army in control of a population of 351,000,000.

The civil administration is directed by no more than 3500 white men. That includes the civil service, medical service, educational and agricultural experts, foresters, railwaymen, engineers and even the mint and assay services. The British element in the police totals a mere 1400 men.

The entire country is divided for administrative purposes into districts, some as large as Yorkshire. Each is under a District Officer, who is administrator, collector of revenues and a sort of *deus ex machina* in every emergency. By the simple, struggling millions he is known as "Cherisher of the Poor." They seek his protection against the oppression of their own people, his advice in times of trouble and his aid in distress caused by cyclone or epidemic. He is endlessly touring his district, going from village to village, establishing and maintaining a personal contact with all under his care. He speaks their languages, even their dialects. He is accessible to the humblest subject, who regards him as both "father and mother." He dispenses justice, much as Solomon did. Let us look at some of his cases :

"Ten native gentlemen of independent means have promised to subscribe for school prizes to the total amount of £1 2s. 8d. When it comes to buying the prizes, only one of them can be induced to pay. What is to be done? *Nothing.*

"A woman has accused a man of looting her house ; it turns out he is her lover, and she adopted this device to conceal the fact from her husband. *No charge.*

“ An old woman accused a man of stealing two penny-worth of green stuff from her field ; it turns out that, having a grudge against him, she has hit on this device to work it off, whereas in fact he took the stuff from his own field. *No charge.*

“ A recruiting party enlisted two men in the jungles of a Native State and brought them into the district, where they were found to be possessed each of a sword, contrary to the Arms Act. What is to be done with (a) the swords, (b) the recruits ? (a) *Confiscated*, (b) *nothing.*”¹

The benevolent despotism of the Indian Government has brought upon its shoulders a wide range of responsibilities. It runs the hospitals, is responsible for medical relief, owns and runs the railways, constructs and maintains all works of irrigation, controls the schools and colleges, and is the greatest employer of labour in the country.

The Civil Servants upon whom these duties devolve are permitted none of the privileges or opportunities of age. When they reach the age of fifty the curfew bell begins its solemn tolling. By fifty-five all are compelled to retire. India will not be ruled by old men.

Business-like, thorough and essentially human, the British official has none of the insincere ornaments of speech that pass for courtesy with the Oriental. By contrast he sometimes appears brusque, but is never consciously so. Cut off from the society of his own kind, he maintains his prestige and yet forms many sincere and lifelong friendships with those under his protection. Snobbishness and condescension would in him be an unforgivable sin. He keeps himself free from all prejudices of class and colour, which, when they are found at all, occur only among the white rabble, men and women utterly lacking in both intelligence and breeding.

¹ *In India*, by G. W. Steevens.

6

None but those who know the North-West Frontier, that gigantic tangle of mountains and plateaux, through which the lofty passes thread their way, can realise the problems of India's defence. Through these passes have poured all the conquerors of India. For four thousand years they came unchecked. Only the presence of the British army at this open gateway saves India from invasion to-day.

Beyond the border swarm the wild, shaggy tribesmen. They are fierce-eyed, eagle-beaked, wear sheepskin and carry rifles and long jezails. They are constantly at war with one another and at intervals join forces in a massed assault upon the frontier. No one ever knows upon the border whether he will wake up on the morrow to find peace or war. No man can cultivate his fields without being shot at save when there's a truce. No man dare venture out after dark. There are hideous vendettas that go on for ten or twelve generations. Every household is consequently a fort, and a rifle is more treasured than either wife or child.

Britain would be content to leave them alone so long as they did not interfere with her peaceful subjects. But they leap across the border in scattered bands, steal cattle and kidnap women and children. These prizes they secrete in the maze of hills and hold up to ransom. From time to time they bear away white women, whose ransom is far higher.

Beyond them lie Afghanistan, Persia and Soviet Russia. Communism has already cast covetous eyes upon India. Lenin said so long ago as 1920 that the way to London lies through Delhi. And have not in the past the Persians repeatedly overrun India? The tribesmen themselves have swept triumphant across the rich Indian plains. There was Mahmud of Ghazni, as we know, who came

every winter for more than twenty years, plundered, butchered and bore the loot away. And there was also Mohammud of Ghor.

Such a frontier is by no means easy to police. One can only hope to confine the trouble to the border-zone and prevent its spreading to the plains of India. The Indian army is not large. The British troops, as we have seen, number only 60,000. There are besides 150,000 sepoy, commanded almost entirely by British officers. They are highly trained, well equipped and supported by cavalry, artillery, armoured cars and the Air Force ; but it is no more than the army of Belgium or Switzerland trying to secure peace for all Europe.

So diversified is this army in composition that only the authority of the English is able to hold it together. Quite a large part of it is not Indian at all but Gurkha. They come from Nepal, which lies beyond the northern border. The rest are composed of so large an assortment of races, speak such a babel of languages, and subscribe to so many conflicting faiths, that the greatest tact and impartiality are required for their control. Indians have not yet evolved a spirit of mutual tolerance and respect such as the English, Scottish and Welsh have done. The situation would be further aggravated in a crisis of democratic control by the conflict of race and creed between fighting man and politician. Two-thirds of India's army comes from the Punjab and the North-West Province. Bengal, supplying not a single soldier, provides the bulk of the politicians !

This assorted army is concentrated almost entirely on the frontier. Throughout the rest of the country one can travel for days without seeing a single soldier. Only in the large towns are there cantonments.

The security of India is in the hands of a small police force which, like the army, is quite disproportionate to the vast size of the country and to the complexity of its

problems. The entire police force indeed comprises no more than 198,000 men. It is wholly Indian, save for six hundred higher officers and eight hundred police sergeants. All are unarmed except a few reserves. An idea of the paucity of these forces will be obtained by a comparison with the London Metropolitan Police. There a body of 20,000 men serves a population of seven and a half million over an area of seven hundred square miles. In India, in the Bombay Presidency, a force of the same size has to serve a population three times as large. In the United Provinces a force of 34,000 men serves 48,000,000 people over an area equal to the whole of Italy.

Consider also the work of the Indian police. Apart from continuous lawlessness on the frontiers, they have to cope with the recurrent inter-racial feuds between Hindu and Moslem, with the large hooligan element in every city, with the grave incitements to terrorism by the seditionists, and with the scattered and nomadic gangs of hereditary criminals, of whom every man, woman and child is a thief or a cut-throat. Take the Crims, for instance. In this vicious community every child is trained in the art of thieving, pickpocketing, burgling and of clipping armlets, bangles, anklets, gold chains, large studded ear-rings and necklaces off the passers-by in the streets. It is the custom of the Crims to tour the country as strolling players. They arrive in the villages with performing monkeys and, while the people are seated on their haunches watching the performance, Crim children creep among them for purses and adornments. There are ten million such hereditary tribes—equal to the entire population of Canada and New Zealand. Two distinguished Rajahs belong to them. They are in duty bound to steal and do so from their own servants. It is not merely a tribute to tradition and an inelegant curtesy to the memory of their ancestors. They would lose caste if they did not.

The police have besides to cope with such ordinary crimes as murder, which is proportionately far higher than in England; with cattle thefts, rioting over the possession of land, crops and fisheries; with trespassing, housebreaking and malice resulting in cattle poisoning; with superstition which leads parents to kill their children if the horoscope is unfavourable, and to drown infants in wells in order to lay ghosts; with slave-traders, dope pedlars and confidence men. There are 10,000 cases of kidnapping and forcible abduction every year; 2000 of rape; and 9000 dacoities. There is a permanent prison population of nearly a million.

The police, though handicapped in numbers and subjected by the seditionists to taunts, social ostracism and boycott, contrive not only to carry on bravely, but to do their work with surprising efficiency.

And the cost of all this? The entire police force in British India and Burma costs no more than £8,000,000 sterling a year. That is precisely the sum required for the 20,000 members of the London Metropolitan Police. The 30,000 police distributed over the wider area of the counties and boroughs of England and Wales are an annual charge of nearly £14,000,000 sterling. The army costs 550,000,000 rupees a year, which is £41,000,000 sterling. The depredation of rats (which religion will not allow the people to destroy) costs India far more—with what return? The annual loss from the maintenance of old and defective cattle is three times as great.

There is an annual "drain," as it is called, of £25,000,000 sterling, which is sent from India to England. The bulk of this is interest on money borrowed for productive works, such as canals and railways. These payments are not made out of revenue but from the profits of the various undertakings. The pensions and furlough of the British members of the services cost nearly £6,000,000 sterling annually. As Indianisation proceeds—and by 1939

half the civil service, by 1949 half the police are to be Indians—this sum will contract until in time it inevitably disappears.

Ranade, often a bitter critic of the English, said : “ A portion of the burden represents interest on moneys advanced to, or invested in, our country, and so far from complaining, we have reason to be thankful that we have a creditor who supplies our needs at such a low rate of interest.”

When all the advantages of British rule are appraised the cost must in justice be set down as infinitesimal.

7

Not many realise that almost half of India lies outside British rule. It is parcelled out among the Native Princes. There are 562 independent States, some Moslem, others Hindu, Sikh or Mahratta. They vary a great deal in size. Hyderabad, for instance, is as large as Great Britain and has a population twice as large as Portugal's. Kashmir is nearly as big. Mysore is larger than the Irish Free State and has twice its population. At the other end of the scale are States that are no more than estates, comprising a few meagre acres. Indeed there are 327 such States, so small that their collective population is a mere 800,000.

With hardly an exception these States are all of recent formation. The ceaseless wars of the past altered the map of India so frequently that few States were able to survive for long. They were constantly being swallowed up by an aggressive neighbour, who in turn was absorbed in the empire of some haughty invader.

Even to-day with the civilisation of Britain around them some of these States wallow in a primitive barbarism. The ruler of one spent £20,000 not many years ago on the marriage of two pet pigeons. Another summoned all

his economists to consider how taxation might be raised in order to feed all the ants in the State in face of the increased price of rice. On the other hand, we have States that are striving to outpace the progress of British India. They are equipped with superb hospitals, enjoy exceptional facilities for education and child welfare

Over all these States Britain casts a benevolent eye. The subjects must not be ill-treated. Nor may the revenues be frittered away on the personal pleasures of the Maharajah. The State is not his private property, but a trust. Britain intervenes when intrigues are started in the palace by jealous women and members of the royal house mysteriously disappear. Britain intervened but lately in Indore when the Maharajah took a cruel revenge upon his cast-off dancing girl. He had held this beautiful dancer, Mumtaz Begum, a virtual prisoner in his palace, but she contrived to escape. She fled to Bombay, where a rich merchant was captivated by her charm. But the Maharajah, resolved that none should enjoy what he no longer had use for, resorted to the methods of the gunmen. He summoned a band of assassins and gave them careful instructions. Mumtaz Begum was motoring one afternoon with her paramour when they were both set upon. The merchant was stabbed to death; the girl severely injured. The British instantly deposed the Maharajah, who left the country with a large fortune and, although he had many wives, sought solace in a fresh one from the United States of America. He met Miss Nancy Miller in Seattle and married her after she had been "purified" according to Hindu rites, which involved a smearing with cow dung and the lowering of her Western lips to the bared feet of Brahmins. The assorted couple are established to-day in splendour in a château on the outskirts of Paris.

Within the limits of such supervision the Princes of India enjoy complete independence. Their vast wealth endows them with an air of romance. They dress in rich

velvets and brocades, wear two-inch diamonds and emeralds in their turbans, carry jewelled swords, and dwell in dream palaces set by lakes that vie with Italy's in beauty.

The Maharajah of Patiala's palace is a quarter of a mile long, with an all-marble terrace along the entire length. There are three hundred motor cars in his garage ; forty-two of them Rolls-Royces. No King or Kaiser has ever possessed so many. One day His Highness's father happened to call at a store in Calcutta, where he was not served with the alacrity he expected. He immediately bought up the store. It cost him £60,000. The Maharajah of Kapurthala has a collection of emeralds that rivalled the late Czar of Russia's. In the marble palace of the Maharajah of Gwalior one could lose a dozen residences of the American President. This Indian ruler wears a string of pearls worth half a million sterling. His father built a miniature train for use at State dinners. It comprises an engine and seven cars, all made of solid silver. The track is laid around the dining-table ; along this travel cigars, cigarettes and liqueurs to the guests. At the Maharajah's hand is an electric button for control. The Nawab of Bhopal travels attended by a hundred servants. The Maharajah of Travancore constructed a cow entirely of gold and crawled through it in public as a penance.

The fate of these rulers is involved in the destiny of India, for their States lie like gems embedded in the heart of the country. All are totally opposed to the clamorous extremists of Congress—who are opposed also, remember, by the Moslems, Sikhs, Untouchables, and all the other communities of India. The Princes want peace and security and are well aware of the disaster that must attend the withdrawal of the strong arm of Britain. To safeguard their interests they meet annually in the Chamber of Princes at Delhi. Their goal is a federation of all India, British as well as independent ; which is a solution that Britain herself favours.

8

In the way of this realisation stands a small band of terrorists, numbering no more than a few thousand. Some of them are earnest though misguided patriots whose fanaticism makes them impatient of the slow yet assured progression towards their goal. Behind them are ranged all those who thrive on chaos. They are unconcerned with the fate of India so long as they are given the opportunity for loot.

What would happen if Britain were sufficiently callous as to abandon the helpless millions to the clamorous few, who in their turn would be equally helpless in the general disorder? It would mean first a sacrifice of the security of five hundred Princes who may be relied upon to fight in self-defence, and, since their ambitions are in conflict, they will be ranged not only against the forces of disorder but against each other. The frontier tribesmen would be free at last to pour in in torrents. Their purpose would be chiefly plunder. The criminal communities now held in leash by the police would assert themselves too. No life would be safe. Property would be destroyed. Business would be at a standstill. The hand of civilisation would be swung back five hundred years. Epidemics would rage unchecked. Death would be triumphant. In their despair the population would turn still more fervently to religion, permitting the priests to fasten their clutches more securely than ever upon bodies as well as souls. "The question is not," says M. Paul Boell,¹ "whether England has a right to keep India, but whether she has a right to leave it."

The China of to-day should provide a warning. That great country, from being in the forefront of civilisation, has degenerated to a land of banditry and constant warfare, which Japan would very much like to put in order—and

¹ In *L'Inde et le Problème Indien*.

who can say that that would not be the best thing for China ?

Japan's way is essentially thorough. It has vigour. There would be no concession to clamour, such as Britain has again and again betrayed. Anarchy would be put down with a firm hand ; and is not history strewn with the triumphs of repression ?

It is manifestly impossible, however, to apply such doctrines without outraging the tenderer consciences of the Christian world, although Christ himself did not hesitate to use force against the money-changers in the temple. One is prone indeed to go to the opposite extreme of tolerance ; though that in itself is a folly just as much to be deplored. The wise old Eastern philosopher and poet Sadi, who had the key to the Oriental mind, declared : " You can stop a spring with a twig. Let it flow unchecked, and an elephant cannot stop it."

If by locking up a few thousand to-day the good of three hundred and fifty million is attained, who can say that the course is not a wise one, any more than one may protest against the imprisonment of a few thousand criminals, gangsters and others in any part of the civilised world ?

Disraeli warned posterity that if India were lost to Britain it would be lost on the floor of the House of Commons. There to ideals of party are sacrificed repeatedly national and international advantages. There repeatedly for party profit the leading-strings of India have been violently agitated. There more than once, in the sacred name of Liberty, India has already been laid upon the altar for sacrifice to the chaos and bloodshed that have stained four thousand years of her history.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B.C.	
2500	Coming of the Aryans.
487	Birth of Buddha.
407	Death of Buddha.
326	Invasion of Alexander the Great.
323	Death of Alexander.
322	Chandragupta becomes king.
298	Death of Chandragupta.
273	Asoka king.
232	Death of Asoka.
155	Invasion of the Kushans.
A.D.	
40	Invasion of the Yueh-chi.
78	Invasion of the Sakas.
120	Kanishka king.
320	Chandragupta I king.
480	Invasion of Huns.
502	Accession of Mihiragula the Hun.
542	Death of Mihiragula.
570	Birth of Mahomet.
606	Accession of Harsha.
622	The Hajira (Flight of Mahomet to Medina).
632	Death of Mahomet.
647	Death of Harsha.
712	Arab conquest of Sind.
933	Foundation of Delhi.
1001	Invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni.
1030	Death of Mahmud of Ghazni.
1175	Invasion of Mohammad of Ghor (Sahib-ud-Din).
1206	Death of Mohammad of Ghor.
	Kutub-ud-Din the Slave King succeeds.
1221	Invasion of the Mongols.
1227	Death of Ghengiz Khan.
1288-1293	Marco Polo's visit.
1296	Ala-ud-Din king.
1297-1305	More Mongol invasions.
1298	Massacre of Mongols at Delhi.
1321	Tughlak Shah succeeds.
1325	Mahommed Tughlak succeeds.
1326	Transfer of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad.

- 1351 Firoz Shah Tughlak succeeds.
- 1388 Death of Firoz Shah.
- 1398 Invasion of Tamerlane.
- 1399-1414 Anarchy.
- 1414-1450 Sayyid rule at Delhi.
- 1497 Arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut.
- 1500 Portuguese settlement at Calicut.
- 1505 First Portuguese Viceroy arrives.
- 1510 Occupation of Goa by Portuguese.
- 1526 Invasion of Babur.
- First Battle of Panipat.
- 1530 Death of Babur ; accession of Humayun.
- 1540 Defeat of Humayun.
- 1542 Birth of Akbar.
- 1555 Restoration of Humayun.
- 1556 Death of Humayun ; accession of Akbar.
- 1568 Fall of Chitor.
- 1569-1576 Building of Fatehpur Sikri.
- 1580 First Jesuit Mission to Mogul Court.
- 1588 Defeat of Spanish Armada.
- 1590 Second Spanish Armada.
- 1600 Formation of East India Company.
- 1602 Dutch East India Company formed.
- 1605 Death of Akbar ; accession of Jehangir.
- 1608 Captain Hawkins arrives at Surat.
- 1612 Portuguese defeated at sea and English factory established at Surat.
- 1620 Danish settlement in India.
- 1627 Death of Jehangir ; accession of Shah Jehan.
- 1631 Death of Mumtaz Mahal, in whose memory the Taj was built.
- 1640 Grant of site of Madras.
- 1648 Transfer of capital from Agra to Delhi.
- 1658 Accession of Aurungzebe.
- 1659 Rise of Shivaji and the Mahrattas.
- 1661 Bombay brought as dowry by Portuguese bride of King Charles II.
- 1666 Death of Shah Jehan.
- Formation of French East India Company.
- 1674 French settlement at Pondicherry.
- 1680 Death of Shivaji.
- 1690 Calcutta founded.

- 1707 Death of Aurungzebe.
- 1739 Invasion of Nadir Shah.
- 1740-1748 War of Austrian Succession.
- 1746 Madras captured by French.
- 1748 Madras restored by treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.
- 1750 War between English and French Companies.
- 1751 Clive captures Arcot.
- 1752 Trichinopoly taken.
- 1754 Dupleix recalled ; peace between English and French in India.
- 1756 Suraj-ud-Dowlah becomes Nawab of Bengal.
- Black Hole of Calcutta.
- 1757 Clive recaptures Calcutta.
- Battle of Plassey.
- 1760 Clive returns to England.
- 1761 Pondicherry captured by English.
- 1763 Pondicherry restored to French by Peace of Paris.
- 1765 Return of Clive to India.
- Transfer of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to East India Company.
- 1767 War with Hyder Ali.
- 1770 Famine in Bengal.
- 1772 Warren Hastings Governor of Bengal.
- 1773 Rohilla War.
- 1774 Warren Hastings first Governor-General.
- 1778 First Mahratta War.
- 1782 Death of Hyder Ali ; end of Mahratta War.
- 1784 Pitt's India Act ; establishment of Board of Control.
- 1785 Warren Hastings leaves.
- 1786 Impeachment of Warren Hastings ; Cornwallis Governor-General.
- 1792 Surrender of Tipoo Sultan.
- 1798 Wellesley Governor-General.
- 1799 Death of Tipoo.
- 1803 Second Mahratta War.
- 1806 Mutiny at Vellore.
- 1813 Lord Hastings Governor-General.
- 1814 Nepal War.
- 1817 Last Mahratta War ; extermination of Pindaris.
- 1818 Annexation of the Peshwas' territory.
- 1824 First Burmese War.
- 1828 Lord William Bentinck Governor-General.

- 1835 Lord Macaulay's minute on Education.
- 1838 First Afghan War.
- 1842 Massacre of British in Khyber Pass.
- 1845 First Sikh War.
- 1848 Lord Dalhousie Governor-General.
Second Sikh War.
- 1849 Annexation of the Punjab.
- 1852 Second Burmese War.
- 1856 Annexation of Oudh.
Canning Governor-General.
- 1857 The Mutiny.
- 1858 India transferred from Company to Crown.
- 1861 India Councils Act.
- 1869 Visit of the Duke of Edinburgh.
- 1875-1876 Tour of the Prince of Wales (Edward VII).
- 1876 Royal Titles Act.
- 1878 Second Afghan War.
- 1880 Lord Ripon Viceroy.
- 1883 The Ilbert Bill.
- 1883-1885 Local Government Reform.
- 1885 Third Burmese War.
Indian National Congress formed.
- 1886 Annexation of Upper Burma.
- 1887 Queen Victoria's Jubilee.
- 1892 Lord Cross's Act.
- 1897 Rand Murder.
- 1899 Lord Curzon Viceroy.
- 1901 Death of Queen Victoria.
- 1905 Russo-Japanese War.
Partition of Bengal.
- 1905-1906 Visit of Prince of Wales (George V).
- 1909 Morley-Minto Reforms.
- 1911 Visit of King George the Fifth and Queen Mary.
Transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi.
- 1914 Outbreak of World War.
- 1917 Promise of self-government to India.
- 1918 Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.
Rowlatt Report.
- 1920 Gandhi begins non-co-operation.
- 1921 Visit of Prince of Wales.
- 1922 Gandhi arrested and sentenced.
- 1927 Simon Commission appointed.

1930	Gandhi begins civil disobedience. First Round Table Conference.
1931	Second Round Table Conference.
1932	Arrest of Gandhi, and imprisonment together with other preachers of sedition. Third Round Table Conference.

APPENDIX B

THE earliest religious books are the Vedas. They are in Sanskrit and are collections of hymns, extolling gods who represent the varied forces of nature. They express a simple fervour and are regarded as at least four thousand years old. The chief of these collections is known as the Rigveda.

Then came the Upanishads. These are books of secret knowledge and include Yoga philosophy. They were written about two thousand five hundred years ago. They introduce the doctrine of Karma, which holds that "as a man sows so shall he reap." With it is intertwined the belief in reincarnation.

Next came the two great epics. The Ramayana is a long narrative poem composed by Valmiki about 400 B.C. It tells the story of Prince Rama, who is a reincarnation of the god Vishnu. Rama's father had three wives, one of whom, Kaikeyi, anxious to further the interests of her own son, prevailed upon the king to banish Rama. With Rama went his devoted wife Sita. We are told of the adventures of the banished prince, of the abduction of Sita by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka (Ceylon), of the efforts made for her rescue, and of the admirable aid given by Hanuman, Commander-in-Chief of the monkeys, who besieged the city of Lanka, slew the demons and restored Sita to Rama. Among the people there arose unfair murmurs about her virtue, but happily Sita was able to prove that throughout the difficult period of captivity she resisted the wiles of the demon. Rama in time was restored to his kingdom. So all ended well.

There are many moral lessons in the Ramayana. We are shown the ideal man, the ideal woman, the perfect father and mother, the perfect son and brother, the perfect husband and wife. This epic has played a remarkable part in the formation of Hindu character.

The Mahabharata is a hotch-potch of multiple authorship spread across many centuries. It is nearly five times the length of the

Ramayana and eight times that of the Iliad and Odyssey together. The bulk of it consists of philosophic discourses and is "an encyclopædia of moral teaching." But there are also poetic narratives of great beauty. Its central story, comprising no more than a fifth of the book, tells of the intense hate that divided two families. One of these families, the Kauravas, numbered a hundred young men, all sons of one father. Their cousins, the Pandavas, numbered only five. The hundred conspired to keep the five from their rightful inheritance. The prolonged hate and intrigue led finally to a bitter war that raged for eighteen days. In this every Kaurava was killed and the Pandavas were able to return to their kingdom in triumph. But they were not happy. So they renounced the throne, and with the one wife they all shared and their faithful dog they retired to the mountains. On the road one by one they dropped dead until only the eldest brother and the dog were left. All were reunited later in heaven.

The most inspiring part of this epic is the Bhagavad-Gita, or the Lord's Song—the "Song Celestial" of Edwin Arnold. It is a poem of great beauty as well as a profound philosophical treatise. It is by far the most treasured of Hindu gospels.

The Puranas are legendary and speculative histories of the universe intermixed with sacred law. These books, of which there are eighteen, include the laws of Manu.

APPENDIX C

IN the Mahabharata it is stated: "Now there was once a famous wise rishi, called Utathya. Mamata was the name of his much-prized wife. But Utathya's younger brother, the sacrificial priest of the heaven-dwellers, Brihaspati the majestic forced himself on Mamata. But Mamata said to her brother-in-law, best among speakers: 'But I am with child by thine elder brother. Desist. And this offspring of Utathya within my body has already studied the Veda with its six auxiliary sciences. But thou art a man of irresistibly powerful seed. Two cannot find room here. But as things are so, do thou therefore now withdraw.'

"Though thus addressed by her aright, yet the noble-minded Brihaspati could not hold back his soul filled with love's urge. Then, with love's longing full, he united himself with her, who had none of love's longing. But as he ejaculated the seed, he that

was in the womb said to him : ' Listen, father dear, do not give way to love's heat, there is no room here for two, the space is small. And I came here first. And withal, thy seed, O holy one, is not barren ; I pray thee not crowd me.' But Brihaspati listened not to these words of the child in the womb, but only forced his way into the lovely-eyed Mamata to beget. When he that rested in the womb marked the spurting seed, with his feet he barred the way against Brihaspati's seed. Then the seed fell swiftly on to the earth, driven back without reaching its place. At this Brihaspati was angered ; when he saw the seed fall down, filled with rage he cursed Utathya's son that was in the womb, he the holy seer, did abuse him : ' Since thou hast spoken such words to me at a time like this, which all beings yearn after, thou shalt go into a long darkness (dirghatamas).''

The child was indeed born blind because of this curse and was given the name of Dirghatamas.

APPENDIX D

DETAILS are supplied in the Vishnu-purana : " At the time of the ritu (just after the period) do thou, O lord of the earth, approach thy wife, happy, under a constellation bearing a masculine name, at a propitious time, during the best even-numbered nights. But go not to the unbathed woman, to the sick one, to the menstruating one, not to her without desire, not to the angry one, not to one in ill-repute, not to one with child, not to one uncomplaisant, not to her that longs for another man or is without love, not to another man's wife, not to one that is faint with hunger, not to one that has overeaten. Nor do thou thyself be weighed down with such qualities as these. Bathed, wearing a wreath and scented, bursting with strength, not wearied or hungry, filled with love and tender inclination, let the man go to the sexual union. The fourteenth and the eighth day of the half-month, the day of the new moon, as also the day of the full moon and also the day when the sun comes into a new house of the zodiac—these are the Parvan days, O ruler of princes. The man who on Parvan days partakes of oil, flesh and woman goes after death to hell, where dung and urine must be his food. . . . Neither outside the vulva, nor in the vulva of another (not human) being, nor using medicines (exciting or strengthening the manly powers), nor in the house of a

Brahmin, a god, or a guru (teacher), let a man give himself up to love's pleasures, nor near holy trees, nor by cross-roads, nor in places where many roads meet, nor in graveyards, nor in groves, nor in the water, O lord of the earth. Neither on the Parvan days named, nor in either twilight, nor troubled by urine or stool, must the wise man go to the joyful union. Copulation on the Parvan days brings misfortune on men, that by day brings evil, that done on the ground has sickness after it, and calamitous is that done in water."

On this subject, as on all else, the scriptural texts are full of contradictions. The temple frescoes and sculptures themselves depict the joys to be derived from certain postures that by implication are forbidden here.

APPENDIX E



MAP OF INDIA

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IT is a strange, frozen world—the world of the sub-arctic—inhabited by a simple and inarticulate people. But beneath the icy bite of this land, there is the joy and sorrow, the passion and pain that is visited on all human beings.

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Mala, his wife Ivan, and his children were of these people. But Mala was also a hero to these people; a great hunter, a resourceful provider, a happy man. Even the white men with whom he traded his fox-skins saw Mala's worth. Yet the white man did most to ruin Mala's life, to make this primitive hero a hunted criminal through a law he could not understand.

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Mr. Houser here writes magnificently of a magnificent character. His prose has the same virility and glamorous quality that marked LAKE OF FIRE, and an added poignancy that makes the work even more sure in its appeal.

ANN OF CARTHAGE

By MARGARET M. BRASH

Author of "Jannock", "The Rooftree Rides", "The Gates are Mine", "Over the Windmills"

THE problem that Alice Gale tried, but failed, to solve was a problem that so many modern women have to face to-day—the choice between a career and marriage. There are compromises life will not brook, as Alice, with her brilliant powers and her too-possessive love, was to discover. It was just when John Varley was feeling the drag of a too-

long engagement that young Ann came home from Carthage. Ann, with her supple grace, her vital, nameless charm, resenting, even before she came, the fact that she was virtually engaged to her cousin, Noel Stavelly.

The three protagonists, however, do not monopolize the entire stage. There are curiously attractive minor characters skilfully drawn. There is Korner, a drunken, lovable old wastrel; and Dorn, too, with his bitter railing jeers at all women; as well as that erratic, immoral genius, Steiner, pathetic in spite of himself. Life is richer for knowing them.

The play and interplay of scenes shift from North Africa to Germany, though the book begins and ends in Carfield, that grimy manufacturing town with its sturdy, clannish Yorkshire folk of the West Riding. In every way the story maintains the tradition this writer began with JANNOCK, her first great success.

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JULIA VAN ASVELD, spoiled wife of an industrial magnate, has a "breakdown" in consequence of the necessity of economizing in her luxurious household and of suffering her husband's temper, and goes to a famous Swiss sanatorium. There she meets Peter Scheffer, a handsome but not over-rich philanderer who is recuperating after a painful love affair, notwithstanding the existence in the background of a pretty wife and two charming children.

In the lovely setting of an Italian landscape, aided by the hot-house atmosphere of the *Kurbau*, and far from the realities of home and marriage, these two romanticists fall deeply in love, and each sees in the other the ideal partner, dreamed about and longed for during all the years of married life. Neither of them knows the real name and circumstances of the other, and when the idyll comes to an end Peter promises to meet Julia later on and Julia consults a lawyer about a divorce. Fate, being even more romantic

than the lovers, brings Julia, who is in search of a temporary home, to the *pension* of her lover's wife. Her ultimate discovery of Peter's married state, and the affection she has developed for his wife and children places Julia in the most awkward dilemma of her life.

The author's delightful handling of the plot shows her to be as skilful an artist in the writing of romantic novels as she is in the field of serious fiction.

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Mr. van Dyke has, surprisingly, given to this his latest story a happy ending. In doing so, he has probably made a host of new friends. But those who have previously admired Mr. van Dyke's outspoken treatment of the white woman's contact with the Far East need have no fear. He shews us the same paradoxical China—lovely, pathetic, humorous and cruel in turn—the same sophistry and glitter of the white people who must make their living there. In fact, because he has now proved that all is not dross in this far land where the moral degradation of the white man is the accepted rule, the background of his scene stands out in even more vivid relief than before.

Janet Scott, the daughter of England's most famous playwright, goes to Peking to marry a man whom she has not seen for several years. But marriage and happiness do not come to her as easily as she had imagined. Such are her subsequent sufferings that they would have been possible in few places other than that strange and distant China. Yet they carry always the ring of truth.

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Author of "The Woman in Possession", "A Man Without Armour", etc.

ANNA KARSLOV, beautiful and ambitious, but humble in origin, gradually forces her way up the social scale. A milestone in her career is her marriage, whilst still a shop girl, to Jimmy Garden, which, by their strong passion for each other, might have proved successful but for Anna's insistent craving for position and wealth.

It is proof of Barbara Hedworth's clever handling of her plot that Anna, for all her relentless scheming, arouses sympathy by her fierce protective maternity towards the child of this unfortunate marriage and by the great-hearted devotion of which she is capable, even while the reader feels strongly for the disillusioned Jimmy, whose happiness is ruined and whose career is threatened by Anna's headlong course.

The climax of this dramatic story again reveals Barbara Hedworth's dexterity and keen understanding of human nature.

JUNGLE LEECH

By H. C. ASTERLEY

Author of "Rowena Goes Too Far", "Tale of Two Murders" (Filmed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), "Land of Short Shadows", etc.

IN a remote, inaccessible clearing of the Malayan jungle lives Guy Cawbin, a young and ambitious doctor, together with his wife—Mary—and his three-year-old daughter. Guy Cawbin is the "jungle-leech" of the title; that phrase being a Malayan colloquialism for any member of the medical profession whose duties take him into the wilder, more uncivilized territories. During Guy's prolonged absence on duty, a wandering prospector, sick and needy, is given shelter by Mary. Their isolated life and mutual loneliness foster a close intimacy, and eventually they elope. Guy determines to avenge his wrongs, but four years elapse before he traces the man who wrecked his life. He takes, under an assumed name, the position of medical officer in a remote tin mine of which his enemy is superintendent. An outbreak of cholera places his enemy at his mercy. Does his ingrained

professional instincts to outwit death gain the upper hand? Does he remember his Hippocratic oath, with its solemn implication that he will tend and care for his bitterest enemy should that enemy ever stand in dire need of his humane ministrations and skill? Or does his still more deeply ingrained natural instincts prevail? It is a fascinating problem; and the scenes and situations leading up to it are packed with drama and poignancy.

JUNGLE LEECH is a powerful story of white folks' hopes and disappointments, loves and hatreds, lives and deaths, enacted against the colourful background of romantic Malaya's savage jungle.

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Author of "Murder by Formula", "The Capital City Mystery", "The Servant of Death", "The Mystery of Vaucluse", etc.

THE House of Murder which is the scene of the mystery in this book is depicted in such a masterly manner that the reader, in addition to being plunged into a strange mystery, will actually get inside the house and feel its dark silence, its uneasy atmosphere weighted down with heavy tapestries, black walnut furniture, and shrouded paintings.

In this eerie place Miss Fannie Bristow, eighty-four, and the last of the many sisters, was found dead—murdered in a fiendishly ingenious manner. And she left a huge fortune in a curious and inexplicable will. What happened when the four next-of-kin moved into the mansion to settle affairs forms the climax of dramatic suspense in this most powerfully realistic mystery story.

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Author of "The Bell Street Murders", "The King Against Anne Bickerton", "The Hanging of Constance Hillier", "The Secret of the Screen", etc., etc.

THE county police were on the point of arresting Lady Denton for the murder of her husband, when Scotland Yard took a hand in the investigation, without, however,

carrying it much further. It was doubtful whether it was a case of suicide, as the result of which Lady Denton would have forfeited a large slice of her inherited fortune, or whether it was murder, in which case it did not seem clear how anybody but Lady Denton could have committed the crime. But circumstances provided a solution. An inquest fastened the murder on another, and whether he was really the guilty party or merely a scapegoat the reader must decide for himself. For Mr. Fowler keeps his secret up his sleeve until the very end—and a surprising end—of this most fascinating and thought-provoking murder mystery.

THE STREET OF STRANGE FACES

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

Author of the famous "Lone Wolf" Stories, "Encore the Lone Wolf", "Speaking of Women", "Detective", etc.

THIS mystery novel has all the skilful ingenuity of the author's famous "Lone Wolf" stories. John Palmer, a budding young author, takes a room in an old, once-fashionable house in Queer Street. Mrs. Fay, his landlady, has as her star boarder sinister old Mr. Machen, who peers at all the passers by from his first-floor rooms. Lovely young May Wilding, who types by day and taxi-dances by night, has the room above John. They meet, and May types John's manuscripts. A gangster leader sees May and pursues her. Again the sinister figure of Machen enters the picture, and John has to bring all his wits into play to circumvent the gangsters and the police.

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By MRS. VICTOR RICKARD

Author of "Spring Hill", "Young Mrs. Henniker", "Upstairs", "Sorel's Second Husband", "The Young Man in Question", "Sensation at Blue Harbour", etc.

FLESH POTS deals with the character of a man whose chief attribute was "charm" and who beggared the lives of those around him in his absorbing selfishness. Had it not been for the timely intervention of Professor Marzy, a mysterious *savant* who came to live in the village of Blynd

as a resident in the local haunted house where, it was believed, he practised magic, "charming" Colonel Heronby would have ruined the lives of his wife and sister-in-law.

The story is full of Mrs. Rickard's usual detached and humorous observation of life, and can be strongly recommended as reading for the sick, sad, or sorry.

ERIKA, MY DAUGHTER

By ARTHUR E. HILMAR

THE love of a father for the daughter of his divorced marriage is the theme of Arthur Hilmar's unusual story. John Kolzen returns from India after an absence of seven years to find Erika grown into a beautiful girl of nineteen. The scene of their reunion is a small watering-place in the Austrian Tyrol, where they are to spend a fortnight's holiday together. John's fears that he may face another such disillusionment as her worthless mother made him suffer are happily dispelled, for though Erika soon becomes the centre of attraction at the hotel she proves to be a girl of unusually fine character and sweetness of heart.

A bond of affection springs up between the two, and soon ripens into a singularly deep emotion. Then a chance word from one of the hotel guests rouses a train of fearful doubt in John's mind. Is Erika really his own daughter? And if she is not, then their love for each other has a greater significance than the love of father and daughter. In an interview with his former wife John learns that his suspicions are true. Though he tries to keep the knowledge from Erika, she too learns it, and they are faced with the problem of a future which their love for each other complicates rather than illumines. This problem is the climax of a beautifully conceived and strongly written story.

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HERE is a story of the countryside, old houses, and the life that Mrs. Stanley Wrench knows so intimately, being a countrywoman herself. Laid mainly in green Warwickshire, chiefly in the part we know as Shakespeare's

country, the novel is concerned with Michael Borde, a motor magnate, to whom a title has been offered. He refuses, but, loving old and beautiful things, has pined from his youth to possess a genuine Tudor house over which, as a show place, he wandered as a boy. He gets his heart's desire, then follows a delicate and unusual love story, set against a background of russet-brown furrows, green woods, the Cotswold Hills and the Feldon country.

His love story goes wrong, so does his business; he loses, too, the old house on which he staked all. How the tangle of thwarted love and ambition is unravelled, and "last taste of sweet is sweetest last", would not be fair to reveal, but Mrs. Stanley Wrench's many admirers will enjoy her latest book, which, indeed, gives a glimpse of that part of the country which is real England.

THE DAUGHTERS OF BELIAL

By SELDON TRUSS

Author of "They Came By Night", "The Stolen Millionaire", etc.

AS Sir Otto Nielson pointed out, crime has its vogues no less than other professional activities, and each vogue flourishes until the law has skilled itself to the appropriate counter-measures. Then new methods and new exponents arise. . . .

In THE DAUGHTERS OF BELIAL the exponents are women, and—what is worse—women of intelligence. That is why Hugh Romilly, who is loaned from the Foreign Office to deal with a matter that is considered too delicate for Scotland Yard, dislikes his task more than anything he has ever undertaken. One cannot, he explains, shoot at a woman. And since physical persuasion is equally against his code, the duel resolves itself into a game of polite subtlety and wit on one side and feline ferocity on the other.

The scene shifts from London's West End to a gay and apparently innocuous country dance at the mansion of a well-known peer. The peculiar happenings there are only equalled by those at the Quern Nursing Home for "neurasthenic" ladies. It is a curious *coterie* of the fair sex that Seldon Truss produces for his hero and his readers. Eve Valery, Julia Dawlish, Mrs. Everard Spencer, Sister Murdoch

. . . Women who have travelled too far along the road to damnation ever to turn back. Women who are, in the true sense of the word, desperate—without hope.

But there is one who plays a lone hand against the Daughters—and against Hugh also. In her possession Hugh found a quantity of that insidious narcotic known as Anodaine X. Through her Hugh is led on strange trails and suffers torments and doubts more acute than any that are due to his official opponents. The story of Hugh and this enigmatic young woman is played against the dark and watchful background of the Daughters of Belial—who are waiting. . . .

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